

The Table of the Lord

by David Wilkerson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being at the table of the Lord, where we receive strength and guidance from God, and learn to hear His voice and obey His will.

Duration: 1:03:04

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:9, Galatians 1:11

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his own journey of seeking a deeper understanding of Jesus. He shares how he realized the emptiness and dryness of his previous preaching methods and decided to shut down his ministry. He also talks about giving away a five million dollar ranch that was consuming his time and resources. The speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking a revelation of the vastness of the Lord Jesus and how this can transform our perspective on problem-solving. He references the story of Moses and the elders eating and drinking in the presence of God as an example of the awe-inspiring experience of being in the presence of the Lord.

Transcript

Those that have been attending the sessions, that we've discovered a lot of hunger, a lot of spiritual hunger, a lot of people to say we've been feeling the awakening and the stirring in our own hearts. We're very much encouraged by that. There's hope for the Church of God to go on in deeper places of the Lord and the sons of God.

God never gives up on His Church. He never gives up on His people. But He always has to... You know, if a pastor... Do you realize if a pastor ever lifts up in a congregation they just slide down into laziness? You have to keep the fire burning, don't you? It only takes about three weeks for a congregation to get absolutely spiritually lazy and even backslid without a clear word from the Lord from the pulpit.

I'd like you to go to 1 Samuel. I know you have your Bible, so I won't even ask. 1 Samuel 20.

Put some marker there because I'm going to be coming back to that. Just put a marker by that. I'll put my marker in here too.

I'm not going to it yet, but I'm going to come back to that. So I'd like to have you keep that marked if you will. Talk to you about the table of the Lord.

The table of the Lord. Jesus, thank You for being so gracious, patient with us. You were with us in the services yesterday and last night.

And oh God, we believe You today for the best time of all. Revelation, knowledge of the Lord, the moving of the Holy Spirit. Lord, we thank You.

We've learned to love and appreciate the leadership that we've met here. Lord, dear men of God who have hungry hearts. And that's evidenced by their being here today.

Just to hear and open their hearts. Bless them and Lord bless everyone who's come. Every hearer of the word.

Enlarge our vision. Oh Holy Spirit, come now. Give me strength in my voice to deliver my heart.

In Jesus' name, amen. There's an old camp meeting song I used to sing when I was a boy. Our camp meeting was in Pennsylvania.

My dad pastored near a camp meeting. It's called Living Waters Campgrounds. Now, when they told me about camp here, I pictured what I had when I was a kid.

It was an old tabernacle with a sawdust floor and straw and little 8x10 cabins. And the water came out of a little spring with a little pipe on it. And there was a tin cup everybody drank out of the same tin cup.

They said, Dave, there's no air conditioning. It's just a camp meeting. I envisioned that.

But when I was a boy, one of my favorite times was lunch time. We'd get down to the, they had a screened-in area covered and before they would eat they sang a song, Come and Dine. The master called it Come and Dine.

And those old timers, they got blessings every time they sang. And we knew what was going to happen. We hated to hear that song.

Kids were hungry. And the Holy Ghost would come down while they were singing Come and Dine. The master called it Come and Dine.

People speaking in tongues and falling out under the power and half an hour to an hour before we could eat. Jesus has a table spread where the saints of God are fed. He invites His chosen people, Come and Dine.

Anyone heard that? How many have heard that? We don't sing it anymore much, but that's a good song. See, my point is there is a table. Jesus has a table spread.

It's in the heavenlies and Paul said, We are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Where are we seated? We are seated at the table of the Lord. Raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

That's Ephesians 2.6. Now, Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. In fact, I'd like to go to Exodus 24. Keep verse 10 in there, but go to Exodus with me.

Exodus 24. I want to show you something. Exodus 24.

Again, verse 9. Exodus 24 beginning verse 9. Then Moses went up with Aaron Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky itself. Yet he did not stretch out his hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel.

Look at this. And they beheld God and they ate and they drank. Look this way please.

Can you imagine what it was like for 74 men, 70 elders, Moses, Aaron and his two sons Nadab and Abihu. 74 men are seated at a table and suddenly Almighty appears walking toward them on a pavement of sapphire stones. The brilliance of it must have been blinding.

And here it comes, walking toward them. And the Bible says they sat, they ate and they drank in the presence of Jehovah. Now can you imagine what that must have been like? To sit in the presence of God and eat and drink.

And the Bible said God didn't stretch forth his hand. He didn't hurt them. Now wouldn't you say if you had been there if I had ever eaten and drunk in the presence of God it would have made such a life changing impact on me.

I would have never been the same. But you know that only, only Moses of all 74 men understood what that meant. Because Nadab and Abihu come down to offer strange fire and are murdered in the presence of God in a holy place.

Their bodies dragged out before the whole congregation. It's a testimony they didn't understand what it meant to be on the table of the Lord. They didn't understand the terror of coming to the table of the Lord with unclean hands offering strange fire.

Aaron, he didn't understand it. He comes down and he builds a golden calf. So how could a holy man of God like Aaron, a high priest, how could he come down from that table having eaten and drunk in the very presence of Jehovah? Having seen him walk a sapphire path? How could a man of God not have a burden to pray and seek Jehovah from that day on? The 70 elders, they backslide.

Moses alone understood the importance of the table of the Lord. You and I, as men and women of God today do not fully comprehend the seriousness of the table of the Lord. Now when I speak of the table of the Lord, I speak of prayer.

I speak of the secret closet, because when you open the door of the secret closet, you're ushered into a banquet hall. You're ushered into the table of the Lord. You go right through that door of the secret closet and inside there when you take your place with Jehovah, you're seated at the table of the Lord.

I don't know if you understand the seriousness of it. What an awesome picture this was. Now all the Old Testament kings, all of them, maintained a royal table.

It was a great honor to be assigned to the king's table. Can you imagine the honor someone had? Hey, he sits at the king's table. This would be like in the I don't know how else to explain it, but to be appointed at the president's table anytime he's there, you have a seat there.

David assigned a seat to Mephibosheth. Do you remember that? He said to Mephibosheth, David said to him, Mephibosheth, fear not, for I will show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake. I'll restore to

thee all the land of Saul and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

This was the greatest honor David could give to Mephibosheth. You're going to eat at my table. You've got an assigned seat.

And every time there was a service at that table, Meshivoth had an assigned seat. Now this, I'm going to show you something. To me, it's very, very important.

The queen of Sheba, remember when she visited Solomon? She marveled at the glorious feast table that Solomon had set. And those had been assigned to his royal table. It left her breathless.

In fact, it said it took her breath away. She said, to me at your table. This is queen of Sheba talking.

The sitting of your servants, the attendance of your ministers and their apparel and your cupbearers. She said, happier thy men, happier these thy servants, which are before thee. She's saying, at your table hearing thy wisdom.

It took her breath away. The way the majesty of Solomon's table. How it was spread.

Good things. Solomon would make his grand entrance at the sound of the trumpets. Some estimate there could have been 2,000 seated at that table of royalty.

And every time Solomon ate, he had a royal table spread. The queen of Sheba marveled at the way they approached it. There was such a dignity.

There was such a sense of awe coming to the table because this man had been given more wisdom than any man on the face of the earth. And his wisdom was extolled at the table. All the Proverbs, all that Solomon ever spoke, he spoke at his table.

That's where they heard it. Can you imagine Solomon looking out and finding empty seats? And he turns to a scribe and says, who's seat is that? Third table to the right. And they say, this is Prince So-and-so.

Why does he embarrass me by his absence? Can you imagine what it would be like for King Solomon to come out to that royal table? And there's someone over here and he's giving no reason for his absence from the table. He has no excuse whatsoever. You are not allowed to leave that royal table other than death or a feast.

We'll show it to you in just a moment. You could not leave that royal table. You dare not embarrass the king.

Under some kings there was a penalty of death. This royal table was taken very, very significantly. Nehemiah said, there are at my table 150 of the Jews and rulers beside those who came up unto us from among the heathens that are about us.

These were great royal tables with great attendance. David said of his lord, thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You prepare a table.

I want to show you, I'm trying to show you in the Old Testament there is a table, a royal table that is a type, Solomon's table is a type of a table of God where you and I gather to hear the wisdom of the Lord and learn his intimacy. Now David himself had been assigned a seat at Saul's table. Now you know to sit at

Saul's table is a great risk for David because Saul was out to destroy him.

A jealous spirit had come upon Saul. David knew that his life was in danger and he consorted one day with Jonathan. You remember the story? He said, I've got to find out whether Saul intends to kill me or not.

And in his consorting with Jonathan he said, I'm going to not appear at the table. He said, I'm going to leave for three days. He said, I've got to know what your intentions of your father are to me.

In fact, it wouldn't hurt us to go to 1 Samuel 20 now. I told you to keep it open there. I hope you have it.

I want to show it to you. 1 Samuel 20 Go to verse 4. Then Jonathan said to David, whatever you say I will do for you. So David said to Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the new moon.

I ought to sit down and eat with the king. But let me go that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, David earnestly ask leave of me to run to Bethlehem a city because it's a yearly sacrifice there for his whole family.

Look at verse 18. Then Jonathan said to him, Tomorrow is the new moon and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. You see it? You'll be missed.

1 Samuel 20 verse 18. I mean it's New American Standard. Jonathan said to him, Tomorrow is the new moon.

You will be missed because your seat will be empty. Verse 24 So David hid in the field when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. The king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall.

Then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless, Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought it's an accident. He's not clean.

Surely he's not clean. Saul said, Surely he's got a reason for not being at my table. He wouldn't embarrass me like that.

Surely he's got some reason. His seat is empty. It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty.

So Saul said to Jonathan, his son, Why have the son of Jesse not come to the meal, neither yesterday nor today? And then look at verse 29. He said, Please let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. If I found favor in your sight, please let me go away, that I may see my brother.

For this reason, he has not come to the king's table. You see, there had to be a reason. It seems like Saul is pacified, though Saul in his heart knew that there was more to it.

Now, Saul's table is certainly not a type of the table of the Lord, but Solomon's is. But listen to this. You will be missed, for your seat will be empty.

Saul comes in, and he sits against the wall with Abner, his bodyguard. He looks out over the table, and right there to his right, David's seat is empty. And here's my point.

I wonder how many times the king of kings would sit at a royal banquet table, and he's always there at his table. How many times he looked out over that table, and he seized that assigned seat, because you and I

have all been assigned a seat at this royal table. He said, When you pray, enter in the secret closet and shut the door.

When you pray to the Father in secret, your father who sees in secret will reward you openly. You and I have been called to keep the feast, Paul said. Let us keep the feast.

Let us go into that secret closet of prayer. Can you imagine what it's like for the Lord to look out over all those empty seats? Men of God so full of vision, men of God are trying to do something for it, but thinking nothing of bringing great embarrassment to him because their seat is empty. Sir, ma'am, why is your seat empty? Why are you not at the royal table? You say, Well, I've got a burden for the Lord.

I want to build Him something. You know, building Him something doesn't excuse you from that table. We are builders.

I think most of us as preachers are frustrating building contractors. We're frustrated building contractors. We love to sit with architects more than the king.

I've been through that. I've spent five years with architects. Just finished one thing into another.

I was always dreaming and scheming, always building. I'm not against building churches. I'm not against building buildings that are needed.

We need the buildings. There's no problem with that. It's a problem that a man takes on a project and he goes out there to that project and wants every brick go up rather than turning it over to deacons or elders to build it.

Let him stay, shudder with God at the table of the Lord and then come out with, Thus says the Lord. He has the word from God. The thing is that if you get your joy out of service rather than communion, you're in trouble.

I used to get all my joy out of service. But the problem with that, if you get all of your fulfillment out of service, you have to keep doing something for them to ever be happy. That's why some of these television ministries, the leaders of those ministries, they no sooner build something, they've got to build something else because all of their joy in the Lord comes from doing something.

It's from service. It's not from communion. Listen, all of our strength must come from communion with the Lord at his table and then all of our service comes out of that communion.

We've got it backwards. We get our joy out of service. No.

He said, You serve me first. You communion with me first. Then you eat.

You minister to me first. That's at his table. I don't I listen to the excuses men use for not praying and seeking the face of God.

But it just doesn't work in these last days. We want to get busy and do something for God. And I'll tell you something.

If you make up your mind that you're going to be at the table of the Lord and you're going to become a man of prayer, there's going to be a conspiracy of interruptions against you. A conspiracy of interruptions.

When I set my heart years ago to seek the Lord, I discovered something.

That when you're busy running around, you're a busy, busy preacher, busy, busy worker, the devil will leave you alone. He's not going to bother you much. He'll let you build anything for God.

He'll let you build 10,000 feet out of just like that and he won't even cross your path. He'll let you build anything you want to build. He'll let you run and visit hospitals.

He'll let you run all day long and never touch you. But the moment you set your heart to seek His face and go to the royal table and get the wisdom and revelation of Almighty God, then you've got a conspiracy against you. Now, not all conspiracies are demonic.

A lot of it's just we have learned to run and we've got a habit of running. There's some preachers, as soon as they get out of the bed and put their feet on the ground in a running position, they grab a quick breakfast, get their car keys and zoom, they're gone and they run all day long. They couldn't stop if they wanted to.

It's a pattern. It's a habit. Some wives are like that.

They run all day long. They've got so used to taking kids here and doing that and doing that, they can't sit down. God shut me down once for a whole year just to break the pattern.

And whatever it takes to break that pattern and say, Lord, I'm going to put your table first. But this conspiracy of interruptions will come against you. You'll find that you'll go into your secret closet.

I told my wife one day, Honey, I started like this. I'm going to go into my office in the first two hours in the morning, get all my work done and then spend the rest of the day in prayer. And I'd go into the office fully intended to spend eight, ten hours a day in prayer.

And I'd go into that office and suddenly here would come someone unexpectedly. Go out the door, here comes another unexpectedly. One day I was there for four hours and my heart was in the secret closet.

I could hear him calling. My seat was empty. I felt the drawing power of the Lord.

Suddenly the telephone was ringing and I was suddenly barraged. I stood up, turned to my secretary and said, This is not natural. This is a supernatural thing that's happening.

This is incredible. That's when God revealed to me it was conspiracy to keep me out. It was satanic.

Now, not always are satanic. But there is a satanic spirit of interruption for a man or woman who says, I'm going to be a man or woman of prayer. You go into the secret closet and you'll yawn like you've never yawned in your life.

Your mind will wonder. You have to bring every thought into captivity. You can sit and talk to anybody else and your mind won't wonder.

You won't yawn in my presence if you sat and talked to me. You go in there and these principalities and powers of darkness are arrayed. I'm never going to the secret closet now without biting every spiritual power, every lying spirit and cast them out of that room so they have no part in that secret closet.

If you give in to that spirit, that conspiracy of interruptions, you wind up giving the Lord the leftovers. You'll be embarrassing the king of kings because your seat is empty. You'll stand before the people empty.

I was in a large church a few years ago, about 5,000 members. And that church was like dry tinder. There wasn't a clear word going forth.

A pastor out of I think 16, 17 associate pastors. And I deserved what was happening. The pastor was one of the busiest men in America.

He I knew where he got his sermons. Read them. And I just made a statement.

Church, let this man of us make patience so he can just seek God. Let's relieve him of all of his duties. He got 15, 16 associates.

Let them care of the church. The church stood and applauded. There was a wild applause.

People want that. They want their preachers in the secret closet. They want to know their preachers are praying, coming out with the word from God.

And I mean, the associates gathered around and said, yeah, we'll take, we can handle it. We're not to eat. I said, I'm so glad you can go away.

He said, I'm not going. And I was, my wife and I had my chin. I said, why? He said, if I were out of here two days, this thing would fall apart.

What arrogance. If I was gone, brother, you'd be surprised how easily God can replace you. When I found that out, all the pride was gone.

How easy it was for God to replace me. It's awful to go for two weeks and come back and say, is everything all right? Everything's fine. I mean, no problem.

No problem. Why am I here? No one needs me. The Lord does.

He needs you at the table. You know, I found something out. I have four children in the ministry.

I have a son who up to recently pastored a primarily black church, a ghetto church in Detroit. And he said, well, dad, you've lived all these years, you've done all these things, and we're young preachers, and we've got to do something. And I said, son, you don't understand.

The greatest thing you can do in the sight of God, you can't do any more than you can do on your knees. You can't be more productive. You can't be doing anything more commendable in the sight of God.

You can't do anything more wholesome, more fulfilling. God wants that more than He wants anything else out of you. I know that now that when I'm on my knees, I'm accomplishing more than when I'm doing anything else on the face of this earth, when I'm spending time alone with Him.

This is a generation with such a limited view, revelation of Jesus. We have a stunted view of Christ. We have such a small revelation.

You know, when I got hungry for the Lord, it was about five, six years ago, I was on the way to a crusade. I traveled in two big buses and a Mercedes truck, and I had at one time a couple hundred workers busy,

busy, busy. You couldn't get to see me for anything in the world.

It took you six months to get near me. Preaching to thousands, but growing empty and dry because I didn't have time or I prayed. We all have what we call a prayer time.

We have our devotions, and we talk about praying as we move. You know, shooting these darts at the Lord. A prayer here and a prayer there, and a devotional state of mind.

That's not what the Lord says. There's a table, a secret closet. You go in there, you sit at that table.

But one day, Brother Ravenhill, who lives next door to me, handed me a book, Christian Incomplete Armor, by Gurnall, an old Puritan, written in 16th century, 17th century. Twelve hundred pages. I took it in a bus and threw it down on a chair and said, who in the world has time to read twelve hundred pages? And I thought, another book from my library that'll never be opened.

Halfway to Florida, opened it up, and I began to read. I hadn't read fifteen pages until I was on my face, on the floor, in my back room, weeping like a baby. I said, oh my God, I don't know Jesus like that man knows Him.

Hundreds of years ago, and that man knows Jesus like I've never even seen Him. And I devoured that book. The second night of that crusade, when I stood and saw how empty I was, how dry I was, preaching my little three-part sermons, how dry, all my illustrations.

I could make people cry. I could play the crowd. I did intensely play the crowd, but I knew how to get a response.

I knew how to give an altar call. I knew how to get people to come up here and cry and say a prayer. But I went to my bus the second night and said, Lord, that's it.

I'm shutting this thing down. I went home. I just, I gave away a five million dollar ranch that we had with my boyhood dream because that ranch was doing nothing but taking all my time, all the money, all the time, building, building, building.

I spent two years just building. It was a boyhood dream to have a ranch in Texas. And the Lord said, Do you want to go all the way? Do you want a revelation of me and my heart? I said, yes, more than anything in the world.

I said, brother, if you're going to go for a revelation of the heart of Jesus, it's going to cost you something. You're going to lay some things down that are robbing your time. You're going to straighten out your priorities.

We gave that ranch to the youth of the mission, ten cents on the dollar. Walked away. I had to let half my staff go.

And I had to take a year off. Not everybody can do that. I said, Lord, if I take some time off, the money will dry up.

The moment I cancelled everything, took the time off, our budget went through the ceiling. God was saying, I'll take care of you if you'll put me first. You'd be surprised if God tells you to go away for two weeks, not to vacation, but to seek the face of the Lord and get a loan.

You'd be surprised how God will meet the need while you're gone. He knows how. And I'm telling you, I don't believe you can pastor church today until you've got two full days alone with God where nobody can find you or someplace where you're alone, where the telephone can't get to you, nobody can get to you.

I had a young man hear me say that. He went home and he said, but he doesn't have my obligations. He doesn't have all these things coming at him.

He was sitting there one day with all these things, and he said, well, Lord, what about the drug addicts? He was the leader of a drug addict center, King Town's drug addict rehabilitation center. And he said, what about those drug addicts who call me out on the street? What about this suicide case over here? What about these? God, what about all these things? These are necessary. These are human needs.

You called me to meet human needs. I've got a heart for it. And the Lord said to him, but what about he needed me at his table? It changed everything.

Now, I put him first, and I come out of that with the whole thing. Now, I'll tell you what, when you're a praying man, you could do more in two hours than you could have done in ten otherwise. God will intensify your efforts and give you a new zeal that you've never had before because you're at the table of the Lord.

Folks, I began to seek the Lord. I got hungry, and I started reading all the Puritan writers. I went through Sibbes and Brown, Kurnal, and John Owens.

I read every Puritan I could read. Then I went through Wesley and Finney, and I went through everything. I was hungry, just trying to get it in.

The Lord then one day came and said, David, put away the books and start eating these books. Get into this. Go into my secret closet, and I'll meet you there.

Now, Paul was not satisfied with a single blinding revelation of Jesus when he was converted. I'm glad Paul didn't live in our day. As soon as Paul got converted, we'd have had some preacher get ahold of him and print a bunch of posters and send them out in the evangelistic field of the great big thing.

I saw a blinding light. I heard God speak. We'd send him out and butter him up and make him a big time evangelist.

There wasn't enough for Paul. That one single blinding revelation of Jesus, that was not enough. Paul said, I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Paul left everything and went out into the wilderness to meet the rose of Sharon. He went out there to meet the Lord. He went out to study Jesus.

I have to know. He went and sat three years at the table of the Lord in the wilderness. And I believe he went to Mount Sinai.

I'm convinced he went to Mount Sinai. He went to Arabia where Mount Sinai is. And I believe he spent his time on Mount Sinai.

He understood the grace compared to the law. What he was saying, I don't care. Let the feudalizers go ahead and preach their legalism.

Let all the Sabbatarians who argue about the Sabbath, let them argue their points of doctrine. Let all those who seek to be justified by works, let them wear themselves out. Let everybody else in the church that think they've passed me by with their worldly wisdom and their philosophies, let them go.

As for me, I've determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And Paul didn't say Jesus revealed Himself to me. He said Jesus revealed Himself in me.

And there's a difference, brother, to have Jesus revealed to you or in you. Paul came out of that wilderness having made three commitments. The three commitments I'd like you to make with me.

First of all, Paul made a commitment to seek an ever-increasing revelation of the vastness of the Lord Jesus. How vast He was. Now, ever since the cross, all spiritual giants have had one thing in common.

They not only revered the table of the Lord, they all became lost in the vastness of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to make a statement and listen closely. Jesus does not solve problems.

He loses them in His vastness. Jesus does not solve problems. He loses them in His vastness.

And when you get a vision of the absolute vastness and the glory and the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ, those are the waters to swim in. And when you get into those waters, you look for your problem and they're lost in this vastness of who He is. This is the way it was with Luther and Zwingli, the Puritans, Wesley, Fletcher, Muller, Stoney, McIntosh, Sparks.

Ravenhill used to meet with Tozer almost once a week. He never went to Tozer's office in New York until noon, because he came in his office at 8 o'clock in the morning or thereabouts, and he had a little one-dollar blanket or one-dollar rug that he bought and that he had purchased at a little second-hand store. And Tozer would go into his office and lay on his face.

He could let the phone ring. Nobody dared go near his office because Tozer was on his face. The first hour, all he did was focus his mind on the glory and the vastness of the Lord Jesus.

All he did was to let his mind begin to comprehend as he sat in the presence of the Lord. Tozer like Ravenhill, Tozer like McIntosh and Stoney, Watsman, all of them, they drank from the same well. These were men who knew the risk of not being at that table.

They knew that they had to have a revelation of the vastness of the Lord Jesus Christ. A revelation of his absolute vastness. You know, there's a devil on the loose today.

He's having great wrath because he knows his time is short. He's displaying great power. Everybody knows what the devil is doing.

The devil is absolutely teaching the nations his power. People are studying the devil now. They're studying his power.

Now we know he's a tin god, been stripped of his power. But in their mind, they're studying the vastness of Satan. I'll tell you something.

Your Spurgeon sermons aren't going to do it. I think Spurgeon's candy cotton. I can't get anything out of Spurgeon.

He's a good man. But there's so much more than that. That's why I like to study the deeper English preachers like T. Austin Sparks, Macintosh, even Darby and Stoney, and some of these great men of God that understood the vastness, and they understood the headship of Jesus Christ, the man in glory.

But you know, I've read volumes. When I got hungry, I read volumes on Jesus Christ. And I've got in my library some books that are 400-500 pages thick about the person of Jesus, his life, his ministry.

And I know when I read them, I have to put them down after a few chapters, because that man has studied Jesus and revealed to him, but not in him. These were men who stayed in their, not in the closet, but stood at their desk. And they wrote, you know, I asked Brother Ravenhill, I said, why is it that some of the English preachers are so much deeper than American preachers? Have you ever heard an Englishman preach? There's a depth.

He said, David, there's a difference. You ask to see an American pastor, he'll invite you to his office. You ask an Englishman to see him, he'll invite you to his study.

And he said, that's what it is. It's a study. It's not an office.

He has a place where he's alone with God. He's at the table of the Lord. There is a difference.

I've read these volumes, and yet I couldn't find anything of his presence in some of these volumes. Bob and I were preaching in New York this last year, was it? Last year. We were in a park right in 42nd Street, downtown Manhattan.

I was trying to preach. And a demonic way in the back had a whistle, an eerie whistle, trying to drown me out. And where he'd move, people would run from him.

Some evidently knew him. He was totally human possessed. Had been saved at one time.

Found out later. And a frog running down his mouth, like a wild man. Well, he could have been, what, more than 25, I'm sure.

24 maybe. And tried to just drown me out. Terrible.

It was satanic. Got through the message. And after he came up, Bob and I were standing there.

He said, I'm demon possessed. I said, how do you know? And just as soon as I said that, I went to shake hands with him. He said, don't touch me.

And then suddenly his confidence changed. Accent changed. His teeth began to grit and the foam began to run down his mouth.

And suddenly the devil exposed himself. Absolute, total demon possession. We went to pray for him and he ran.

Screaming. Jumped over a hedge and was gone. Bob started praying for him.

Lord, bring him back. He came back. Bob and I went to him and as we were walking to him, he saw us coming.

He told us already he wanted to be delivered. He said, I have got to be delivered. This thing is driving me crazy.

Losing my mind. We couldn't get more than ten feet from him. But from one side, Bob started taking dominion.

I started taking dominion over on this side. And suddenly he raised his hands in a guttural voice. Not his voice.

You can't have this body. It belongs to me. And started to run.

And Bob prayed, Oh God, put a wall of angels around him. Put a wall. I lost touch with him.

I went over to pray with some drug addicts. About ten minutes later I looked over and there was a little circle. There he was.

And Bob and one of our other friends was standing there. And Bob was just praying, Lord, put the wall around. Don't let him get away this time.

Wall him in. And there was a wall there. Because he'd go one way, go so far and back off.

He'd go this way and back off. There was a wall. God instructed Bob to go next to him.

He approached him and he said, How'd you get in there? How'd you get in here? There was a wall. Bob was in the circle. He began to take dominion in Jesus' name.

The Lord rebuked you, Satan. Be cast out. Go.

And there was a wrenching sound. He fell to the ground like a dog and crawled into the bushes groaning and grunting like an animal. Bob and the Christian workers just kept praying, God, total deliverance.

Total deliverance. Taking absolute dominion and authority in the name of the Lord. And all of a sudden out of those bushes you heard the sweetest sound, Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus. That boy comes out and blesses himself and he's a new man. You can see it all over.

He's hugging people saying it's all over. A new man. Satan was gone, bound by his power.

Folks, we're facing a demonic world. We're facing things that no other preacher in any other generation ever faced. We're facing things that Tozer never even understood.

We're facing things that Wesley couldn't even comprehend. Absolute demon power exposed in its awfulness, in its fury. The devil's come down and it's having great wrath.

What kind of man is it going to take in the pulpit? What kind of authority is that going to take? It's going to have to be men that have a revelation of absolute power and the vastness of his power and the glory of Jesus Christ. A revelation beyond anything they've ever known. And Paul made that commitment.

I'm going to know him in his fullness. I'm going to know the fullness of Jesus. I want to know him in his vastness.

Every one of these men that I've named, all of the Puritans and all of them, they had a concept in their heart of the absolute glory and vastness of Jesus Christ. By revelation, he made known to me the mystery. By revelation, I see the unsearchable riches of Christ because we have a boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Paul said, I didn't get what I've got through books. I didn't get what God gave me from other men. He said, by revelation, he made known to me this mystery.

I saw his face. There was nothing inherent in Paul that made him any better than you and I. My dad said something to me once, he said, David, there's only 24 hours in a day you can pray as intensely and as long as Elijah. And God always makes a way for a praying man.

There's only 24 hours in a day. My father kept pounding in it. 24 hours each day, you can pray as intensely, you can pray as long and sincerely as Elijah the prophet.

He said, if you do that, David, God will give you a ministry the rest of your life. And I'm so glad my father kept pounding that into me. God makes a way for a praying man.

There's so little praying in the pulpit today. There's such a shallowness. I was in one church.

The pastor was so busy. He'd preach from the song book. This is the honest truth.

Fort Worth, Texas. He'd get there a half hour before and get the song book out and get one of those five verses. And he'd go over the verses and say, now these songs have great theology.

I want you to start. He had a 15 minute little sermonette. You know, you've heard of sermonettes for Christians.

He's here with this little 15 minute ditty. I asked a preacher, I said, when do you get this study? He was so busy. He said, about two hours before the Sunday morning service.

I go in my closet and I get something. Slop. He's slopping.

He had no right, pastor, to stand before these hungry sheep without being prepared. Without a revelation of Jesus Christ. Not just words.

Not something you picked out of some man's sermon book. But a revelation in you of the vastness of the Lord Jesus Christ. I didn't get this from a book.

God revealed this to me. By revelation, I got my message this morning. The unsearchable riches of Christ.

We're not taking advantage of that access. Paul said, the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it by man, but I was taught it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Paul made a commitment to preach Jesus Christ with an ever increasing intensity.

He said, I'm going to preach Him with more intensity every day of my life. Paul said, in Him we live and move and have our being. Do you know that you can't preach Jesus with an ever increasing intensity until you have an ever increasing flow of His revelation? Otherwise, you preach a stilted view of Christ.

Listen, some people are still preaching their view of Jesus. They got one. They were first saved.

And when they're in Bible school, they're preaching their Bible school vision of Jesus. All my lifetime, I've wanted to preach it with an ever increasing intensity of who Jesus is. But I couldn't do it because it has to be sustained.

You can't preach Christ without sustaining a fresh revelation all the time. It has to be flowing. Oh, what a stunted view of Christ our churches are getting because there's not a fresh flow of that revelation.

I'll tell you what, the more time you spend with Him, the more He's going to show you about Himself. There'll be an ever increasing flow when you're in that secret closet at the table of the Lord. I have so many people come to me and say, God told me this.

God told me that. You ever heard so many people say I have a word for you? Pastor, how many people come to you now? Everybody's a prophet today. Everybody wants to be a prophet.

That's why I... You hear me say I'm not a prophet. I'm like Amos. I'm a sheep herder.

God called me to prophesy. I'm a watchman. I don't want to be identified with this stuff.

I must have ten letters a day from so-called prophets who said I've got a word from God for you. Most of it's nothing but rubbish. Terrible.

If I listened to all these prophecies I'd be going in a circle. You see, if God does send a prophet to you, He's only going to confirm what He'd already told you. You know, I've had so many prophets in my office.

I don't listen. I don't even accept if they say they're a prophet, I don't even listen anymore. I've had them leave their shoes at my desk, at my door as a curse to me because I wouldn't listen to their prophecies.

The last prophet I had in my office, he started to say, Dave, I have a word for you. And I thought, uh-oh. So I started first.

I said, well, first, before you give me a word, I'm going to tell you something. I said, I've got my son who's a pastor home with me right now. I had breakfast with him and we talked about the Lord.

I had lunch with him and we talked about the Lord. Last night I had three hours with him talking about the Lord and everything was in my heart I told him. I said, I want you to know I'm his son.

I spent breakfast with him. I've been lunch with him. I've been at supper with him.

And I spent three hours with my Lord last night. And I tell you what, if he had anything to tell me, he'd have told me. And if you tell me anything, you'd better back up what he's already told me.

He lost his thought. I slowly walked out the door. You know, the church is getting weary of so many voices.

Look at me. How many voices are there coming down the road now? You know what was said of Samuel? Not a word fell to the ground. Why? He walked with God.

That's been the prayer of my heart that I wouldn't just throw words out. Not counseling words. Not so-called wisdom words or anything else, but to have a sure word backed up by an ever-increasing revelation of who the Lord Jesus Christ alone might be.

I want to just give one other thought here. Thirdly, the commitment was made to have an increase of Christ's life that corresponds to my revelation. Listen, you know what I'm trying to say? You can't preach Christ until you live Christ.

I'm going to close in just a minute. You know, I don't think a man should preach anything until it not only passes through him, but works its way into his character. Now, not everything you preach, Pastor, not everything you teach on your school teacher have you learned to embrace fully.

Whether there are some things that you have to preach and preach even though you've not achieved it yet. I don't preach according to a measure of my achievement. I preach myself under conviction.

Everything I preach, I've not yet achieved. If you could preach only what you've achieved, you couldn't preach almost anything. You'd be shut up.

But you preach to His measure. You preach to His measure. And it says, Lord, let me live up to that measure.

There have been many times I've preached. I've said, Lord, that's not quite fulfilled in my life yet, but I want it. There's nothing hiding it.

There's no sin between me and you. That's my goal. And God sees you're reaching for that.

He'll give life to what you say. Otherwise, it's just death that you minister. I got a letter.

There's a dear saint up in Canada, Brother Warnock. He's written a number of books, Feast of Tabernacles, The Hyssop That Springeth Out of the Wall, a number of great books. He's near 70.

And he writes me letters like getting a letter from the Apostle Paul. Let me read to you an excerpt from one of his letters. Listen closely, please.

He said, David, the fact that Paul saw only in part didn't lessen the glory of what he already saw. See, he only saw in part, but that didn't lessen the glory of what he already saw. We may not see it all yet, but that doesn't lessen the glory of what we've already heard.

Isn't that wonderful? You haven't seen it all, but what you do have is glory. There's more glory ahead, but thank God for the glory that's already revealed. He said, nor did it make it difficult for him to declare it.

Don't be afraid to declare what you have until you get the rest. He said, I believe that in all of our seeking after him, we have to recognize that it's the knowledge of Christ that we truly need. And the truth we seek is truth that must be wrought out within us first by the Holy Spirit before it's actually ours.

He said, it'll pass through you, but it's not yours yet. And we shouldn't really preach, he said, until in one measure another, it's ours. It may not be ours in fullness, but it's ours by claim.

Knowing this, we begin to understand that God does not see fit to impart more revelation, nor should we even desire more revelation until we're able to digest it and build it into our lives. We should even pray for greater revelation until we're ready to take into our lives and digest and make use of what he's already given to us. Revelation can do us more harm than good if there's not a corresponding ministration of life in our spirits.

If you're not using the revelation always given you and making it work in your life, it's only harmful to get any more. He said, the tree of life is still more desirable than the tree of knowledge. Oh, I like that.

I'm going after him who's the tree of life. Let the rest go after the tree of knowledge. I want the tree of life.

I'd rather hear a 15-year-old kid get up and preach Jesus because he's walked with him than hear a theologian break down all the Greek and Hebrew roots for me. Wouldn't you? He said, just in knowing and seeing him, we're suddenly going to know and understand mysteries of truth that we could never have unraveled by our research. Now that sounds heavy, but listen to it.

He said, the few hours you spend with the Lord, you're going to learn more about him than you could in all your days and weeks of research. Go through all your libraries, try to learn what you can. A few hours with him, you get more than all your research combined.

Hallelujah. Working in you, that which is well-pleasing in his sight. Paul said this, having preached others on myself, become a castaway.

I don't know about you, but the one thing I really hunger for more than anything else is to be shut away with him. It's coming to place now that I get jealous of anything that keeps me away from him. That's the way it should be in all of us.

We should be jealous of those things that keep us away from his presence. Now I thank God for the wooing and the calling that's going forth now by the Holy Spirit to call men to prayer. I ask you before I close right now, I'm going to ask you, are you a man of devotion? Are you a man seated at the table? Are you a man of true prayer? I can tell a man who prays, you know how I can tell him? Be with him for ten minutes and I can tell.

The man who prays doesn't talk to me a word about his church. Doesn't talk to me about what he's doing. Say, Brother Dave, did you ever see 2 Corinthians 7 chapter? Have you ever seen what the Lord's really saying, what Paul's trying to say? Last night I looked at that, God opened that to me.

You know what he's saying? You know what he means? Suddenly the man is showing me what Jesus said to him. I know he's been in the presence of the Lord. You get around me, you talk to me about your golf course.

Your golf course. Talk to me about your family. Talk about anything you want.

I'll know soon what you are. The man who's really siding with God doesn't have business on his mind. My father was assistant superintendent of the Assemblies of God in the Eastern District.

And I used to see the pain of my father. One committee meeting after another. I used to watch him come home and try to go in the secret closet.

There was a time I heard my dad groan for hours and hours. He would groan in prayer. That's part of the thing that's in me now that drives me to prayer was my praying father.

And I watched how his committee meetings, committee meeting after committee meeting after committee meeting. Some pastors belonged to all kinds of committees in their town. Those committee meetings, running, running, running.

And my father, when I was a young preacher, he'd unburden his heart. He'd have to sit and listen to all the filth of all the men in the movement who were falling and cheating on their wives and all the dirt and the filth and his mind come in. And he'd say many times, David, sometimes it felt like walking away from it all.

He said, my mind is so full of these things. I'd watch how hard it was for my dad to pray. And I watched for months the effect it had on his preaching.

And I used to grieve for my father. And my father died a praying man. He was only 54 when he died.

He was one of the busiest men. But somehow before he left, God made provision for him. Gave him some quiet time.

And my father was a praying man when he died. I got a letter when I was in Midwest from my mother. Dad's been glorified.

I couldn't believe it. 54 years old. My age.

But I looked at all the busyness. I looked at men who used to pray, weep. I had one of the busiest pastors in Dallas, Texas come to our conference in March.

He came up to me, put his arms around me and said, when you mentioned committee meetings, that's me. He said, I'm a committee man. He said, I haven't cried in five years.

I haven't wept a tear in five years. My heart's not broken. He came over to the side and hugged me, trembling like a baby.

He said, I need a break. He said, everybody on my committee is just like me. The weeping is not there anymore.

The brokenness is gone. It's hard when you're a pastor. It's hard when these busy things come.

I know that. But God's trying to break our hearts. And that's the only thing that's going to bring it.

From the leadership right on down to all of us. And I'll tell you, I can't preach like this if I hadn't had God tear my soul apart. You put this in your mind and think about it for a minute.

I had an international pulpit. I preached to some of the biggest and smallest crowds on the face of the earth. And I was backslidden in my heart because of my business.

And even at that, I was praying an hour a day. At least an hour a day. But that won't do it anymore.

What we're facing now there has to be a spiritual authority that comes from men who come from the table of the Lord, having heard the wisdom of Almighty God. And I'll tell you what, God told me clearly, if He's ever told me anything, don't preach the headlines. I try not to preach the headlines.

Because the man who's in prayer, he's far ahead of the headlines. He's got a word from God that's right up to date. You may never even hear another news program the rest of your life, but if you're studying with God, you're way ahead of the crowd.

You're preaching way ahead of everybody because you've heard a word from God. Stand with me for just a moment, please. Now we're going to have a double header this morning.

I'm going to come again just a moment with Brother Bob. But let's just stretch a moment. Let's just ask him to put a burden on our hearts.

Father, in your loving way, Lord, I'm not chastising. I believe that the leadership that's here this morning, I see these as praying men. Lord, I believe these men prayed there wouldn't be this broken spirit that we see.

But Lord Jesus, there are pastors here that serve in committee after committee after committee. Lord Jesus, if they've got that kind of time, may they remember the table of the Lord this morning. Pastor, would God put it in your heart right now to make a new commitment to His table? Lord Jesus, I want to be that man of prayer.

I'm going to take dominion over this conspiracy of interruptions. Hallelujah. You know what I'd like you to do? I'd like you to stretch a little bit.

Put your hands up if you want to and just reach out to the Lord and say, Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for your table. Lord, I know you call me.

I want to make that commitment to your table. I want to make that commitment to your table, Lord Jesus. You may be seated.

You may be seated.

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