

The Fear of the Lord

by Derek Prince

Jesus is the ultimate high priest who offers Himself as a sacrifice and provides direct access to God and perfection.

Duration: 2:17:57

Scripture: Psalm 2:11, Proverbs 1:24-33, Proverbs 19:23, 1 Peter 1:17-19

Topics: "Fear Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses three important points. First, God's Spirit is searching for individuals with a heart that is fully committed to Him. Second, when God finds such a person, He will strengthen and support them. Third, the fear of the Lord is a crucial characteristic of someone with a right relationship with God. The speaker acknowledges that the phrase 'fear of the Lord' may have negative connotations, but emphasizes its importance. The sermon encourages listeners to cultivate the fear of the Lord in their lives and offers a book and cassette for further study on the topic.

Transcript

All right, now we're going to begin our study of Hebrews chapter 8. We'll be using the printed outline. But before we go directly into chapter 8, I would like to review very rapidly with you the material on sheet 7, oblique 4 and 7, oblique 5, which is headed, Points of Contrast Between the Levitical Priesthood and the Priesthood of Melchizedek. This will be a kind of helpful introduction to the comparison that follows in chapter 8, which we'll be studying between the Old Covenant and the New.

So very quickly, without pausing for comment, we'll go through the 14 points of contrast between Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek. First of all, Melchizedek's priesthood combines priesthood and kingship. The priesthood under the Old Covenant was allotted to the tribe of Levi, but kingship to Judah and no interchange was permitted.

Number two, Melchizedek gave to Abraham bread and wine, emblems of the New Covenant, not previously given by Abraham. But the Levitical priests only gave back to the Israelites part of the sacrifices previously received from them. They had to receive before they could give.

Point number three, Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. The Levitical priests gave tithes through Abraham. Point number four, Melchizedek, because of an indestructible life, had a permanent priesthood which never passed by succession to others.

The Levitical priests, because of mortality, had only a temporary priesthood. Number five, Melchizedek does not trace his genealogy from Abraham. The Levitical priests must be descended from Abraham.

Number six, Melchizedek blessed Abraham, therefore he is greater. The Levitical priests owe their blessing to Abraham, therefore they are less. Number seven, Melchizedek provided direct access to God and perfection.

The Levitical priesthood could not provide direct access or perfection. Number eight, Melchizedek was priest by the power of an indestructible life. The Levitical priests only on the basis of a physical requirement.

Number nine, Melchizedek was appointed with God's oath. The Levitical priests were appointed without an oath. Number ten, Melchizedek ensures a superior covenant.

The Levitical priests were linked to an inferior covenant. Number eleven, Melchizedek and his priesthood provides one all-sufficient priest. But the Levitical priests, because of death, had to be many and were never sufficient.

Number twelve, Melchizedek through his priesthood in the person of Jesus is able to save completely and forever. But the Levitical priests are unable to save. Number thirteen, Jesus as the priest after the oath of Melchizedek did not need to offer sacrifice for his own sins.

He had none. But the Levitical priests needed to sacrifice first for their own sins. Number fourteen, Melchizedek's priesthood provides as a priest God's perfect Son.

The Levitical priesthood provides only men with human frailty. Now, with that in mind we'll go into chapter eight, the main part of which is a comparison between the old and the new covenant. But remember that the covenants are linked to the priesthood.

So we're turning now to Hebrews chapter 8, beginning at verse 1. I'll read these in translation. That's 1 and 2, then we'll go through the outline. My translation is not always fluent because I have to stop sometimes and think what's the best word.

The main point of that which we are saying is that we have such a high priest who sat down on the right of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of the sanctuary or the holy things. I think the phrase includes more than just the sanctuary, it means all the vessels that were used in the sanctuary.

So he's a minister of the holy things and of the true tent or tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. Bear in mind that the tabernacle of Moses was a real tent. And the word that's used there in Greek to describe it is the same word that's used to translate the Hebrew festival of sukkot or tabernacles or booths.

So, the word has a history all through the Bible. All right, we'll pause there and we'll look now at the outline. These two verses extract the main points about Jesus as high priest from the foregoing elaborate comparison which we looked at just in summary at the end of chapter 8. The four points which are brought out in this brief summary at the beginning of chapter 8 are as follows.

And as I said, the writer says the main point that we're trying to make is this. So if you're a little confused by the elaborate comparison, in chapter 7 he's trying to help you. He says, don't try to remember it all.

Here are the four main points that you need to keep in mind which distinguish Jesus as our high priest. Number one, He sat down. He never needs to repeat His sacrifice.

You'll observe that through these chapters of Hebrews there is great emphasis placed on the fact that Jesus, having finished His ministry, sat down. And this is always contrasted with the Levitical priests who never sat down and always remained standing. And it's interesting, if you study the description of the furniture of the tabernacle, there are no chairs anywhere.

There are no seats. And that's deliberate. They never sat down because their task was never complete.

They never could offer a sacrifice that ended it all. They just offered temporary sacrifices. And so they had to remain standing.

Jesus, having offered one all-sufficient sacrifice forever, sat down on the throne. So there's great emphasis in the fact that He sat down. And then it says He sat down on a throne.

Now what kind of person sits on a throne? A king. So again, it's pointed out that not only is He a priest, He's also a king. That's the distinctive feature of the order of Melchizedek.

Because Melchizedek, His Hebrew name means King of Righteousness. And it's also stated in Genesis 14, He was a priest. As we pointed out in the brief summary at the end of chapter 7, under the Levitical law it was forbidden for a priest to be a king or a king to be a priest.

Now there were two kings in Old Testament history that tried to carry out the function of a priest. Which was to offer sacrifice. One was King Saul and the other was King Uzziah.

And both of them were judged by God. So there was an absolute line of division between priesthood and kingship. That's under the Levitical covenant.

But the original priest first mentioned in the Bible is not a Levitical priest but Melchizedek. And he was both king and priest. So when Jesus came, the priesthood of Melchizedek, which had been kind of in abeyance, re-emerged in Him.

Do you remember we saw that the two things that He offered to Abraham were bread and wine. And we... I don't know if it's ever occurred to you, but at the Last Supper when Jesus took the bread and the wine and offered them to His disciples, He was saying by that act, Here's the priesthood of Melchizedek restored in Me. I'm both your priest and your king.

Let me point out the practical application. As a priest He represents us. He sees to our interests.

As a king, He has the authority to get it done. So never come to Him just as a priest, but come to Him as a priest who's also a king. You see, what seems to be a rather kind of almost verbal distinction when the first encounter it, becomes charged with meaning when you meditate on it.

You could say, Well, so, He's just a king and a priest. But when you think it over, it has a great meaning for you and me. All right, the third main point is that Jesus exercises His ministry in the heavenless.

The Levitical priests operated on an earthly level. Jesus didn't take over their priesthood, but His priesthood is instituted in the heavenless. And fourth, it's in the true tabernacle.

Pitched by God, not man. I like the word pitched. To me it's such a practical word.

I'm going to come to this a little further on, but I really believe there is a tabernacle in heaven. If you find difficulty in believing that, that's your privilege. I believe God pitched the tabernacle in heaven.

After all, His Son was a carpenter. So, the Godhead is very practical, believe me. All right, we'll go on now with verses 3 and 4. Verses 3 and 4. For every high priest is appointed or holds office for the purpose of offering gifts and sacrifices.

Both gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore, it is necessary, or it was necessary, that this man also, that's Jesus, should have something to offer. Now if He were upon earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those priests who offer gifts according to the law.

All right, we'll stop there. This brings out one extremely important point which we did deal with in our previous series. What is the supreme unique function of a priest? Expressed in one key word, only one word.

That's right, sacrifice. No one but a priest has a right to offer sacrifice. And, together with that, nobody has a right to offer anything to God unless he's a priest.

This is the truth that's very clear in the Scripture. But, most Christians simply haven't grasped it at all. We have no right to come to God and offer Him anything, unless our offering is taken up by a priest.

See, most people don't think that. You cannot put your offering in the, quote, collection and give it to God unless it goes through a priest. People who are not priests have no right whatever to offer anything to God.

Neither gifts nor sacrifices. I can see you looking astonished, and I appreciate your astonishment. But we have brazenly assumed that we could walk up to God at any time and slip ten dollars in His hand.

We can't. That isn't the way God operates. It's wonderful if you want to give God ten dollars, but it's got to go through a priest.

He's the only kind of person that has authority to offer gifts to God. So, if we don't have a priest, we have no way of offering anything to God. No Israelite could offer anything to God unless he was a priest.

That gives tremendous power to priesthood, doesn't it? In a certain sense, priests can either close or open the door to God. And in certain sections of the church at certain times, that power has been abused by priests. Because they've dominated the people of God.

Saying, in effect, if you don't do what we say, you can't get through to God. Now, that's not true of human priests. Thank God we have another priest.

But it is true. Of Jesus. If you don't go by Him, your gift or sacrifice is not accepted.

See, a priest to represent you is not a luxury. It's not some fine point of theology. It's an absolute essential.

If I can impress this on you, you're going to have a very different attitude... toward Jesus from now on. You're going to see that your entire ongoing relationship to God... depends on Jesus being there. If you don't have Him there, don't try to get to the throne.

There's no way. Every high priest, it's very important, is appointed... to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Now, Jesus doesn't offer the sacrifice of the Levitical priesthood.

He's not a Levitical priest. But, He also has His gifts, His sacrifices. The first and primary sacrifice that He offered was what? Himself, that's right.

He was both the priest and the victim. And when we come in His name and through faith in Him... we can offer to God our praises, our worship, our finance, our service. But apart from Him, none of it is accepted.

You may say to yourself, if I offer to God a million dollars... He's going to be pleased. You can't get a million dollars to God, unless you go through Jesus. God, in the last resort, will be well off without your million dollars.

God is not for sale. It's praiseworthy to offer, but bear in mind, it's only acceptable... through a priest. All right, going on, verse 5. We'll read the verse and then we'll comment on it.

It begins with who, that is, the priests who offer on earth. Who do their priestly service, I'm amplifying a little bit. In what is a pattern or a model... and a shadow of the heavenless, the things in the heavenless.

As Moses is warned by God when he's about to make the tabernacle. For, God says, see that you make it all or everything... according to the pattern which was showed you in the mountain. So, what the writer is saying is, the Levitical priests on earth... do their priestly service in something that is only a model... or a shadow of the real thing which is in heaven.

And in substantiation of that from the Old Testament, we can turn to the passage that's actually quoted. We look in Exodus chapter 25 at two successive verses. Exodus 25, and this section of Exodus deals with... the instructions for making the tabernacle and all its furniture and utensils.

Exodus 25, verse 9, the Lord is speaking and He says to Moses, According to all that I am going to show you... as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. God is very specific. He says, I'm going to give you an exact pattern, and you've got to make it exactly according to the pattern.

But the pattern that I'm giving you is a pattern... of which the original is in heaven. And then in the same chapter, verse 40, Exodus 25, 40, and see that you make them... after the pattern for them which was shown to you on the mountain. So when Moses was up on Mount Horeb in communion with God, and God gave him the instructions for making the tabernacle... and all its furniture, God showed him an actual pattern, or maybe He showed him the original.

He didn't just have the dimensions. He had the dimensions, but He'd seen what He was supposed to make it like. You see, you find there are a lot of things in the Bible, a lot, many things, that although we have the dimensions, we really don't know how to make them.

One is the tabernacle. Lots of different, very learned scholars have worked along, but they've never come up with a definitive, final picture... of what the tabernacle was like. The other is the temple of Solomon.

Now concerning the temple of Solomon, David says that when he was making preparation for it, God caused him to know by His hand upon him in writing the pattern. So David, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had a pattern, a blueprint of the temple. Now, we don't have the blueprint.

And if you have just the dimensions without the blueprint, it's not at all clear in some ways what you're supposed to produce. So, the point I'm making is that the tabernacle that Moses made was based on an original in heaven. I think that's very clearly stated there.

I don't think there's any possibility of interpreting those words otherwise. You see, why I'm laboring this point is because I think a lot of Christians think that material things on earth are real and spiritual things in heaven are kind of misty, shadowy, amorphous, like little bits of mist that float around. And they think if anything were specific, it wouldn't be spiritual.

I know that was my attitude as a teenager attending the Anglican Church in Britain. I thought about religion as a kind of mist that hung around in the corners of damp old buildings. That really was my mental image of it.

I'm not saying it was right. I always thought if I get religious it will be when the mist settles on my head. But it never did.

So I concluded in the end it wasn't for me. And I really wasn't too sorry, was I? But what I'm saying is that's not the way the spiritual is. The original is the spiritual.

Things on earth are copies. My friend Lance Lambert made a remark recently at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem which really impressed me. He said this universe is primarily spiritual.

It's the spiritual things that are the ultimate realities. Now you might say, well, does Jesus' robe really have a color? I believe it does. Is there a certain material of the streets of the New Jerusalem? I believe there is.

What are the gates made of? I believe they're made of real pearls. The pearls we have on earth are just a faint shadow of the heavenly pearls. Now that's my conviction.

Our old Arab maid who some of us here will remember well, Jamila. Many, many years ago when she was baptized in the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Lydia, she went out like a dead person. She was on the floor for probably a couple of hours.

But Lydia knew she was in the hands of the Lord. And when she came to, she was speaking in tongues. And she said in a naive way, she hadn't any knowledge of the Scriptures, she couldn't read, she said, I was walking in a most beautiful place on something that was like yellow velvet.

She said, then I came to Jesus and He breathed upon me. And when He breathed upon her, she began to speak in tongues. Well, I think heavenly gold is like yellow velvets.

But that's just my opinion. What I want to point out to you is something, this is kind of philosophic, I won't stay in it too long. We tend to think that everything on earth has a precise color.

But in actual fact, that's not true to experience. This past summer, Ruth and I were making a journey through the Mediterranean. And I stood on the deck, sometimes for an hour or two, and looked at the sea, the ocean.

You know what? It was a dozen different colors at different times. It went from light blue, through purple, through black, through every shade of gray. What is the color of the sea? Well, it reflects the sky, it depends on the depth of the water, it depends on the chemical contents.

There's many different features. When we say the sea is blue or gray, what we're saying is there's a certain series of different colors that appear in different light settings. And we know them, so we think about it as precise.

But it isn't. It says in one place about Jesus, I believe it's about Jesus in the Song of Solomon, His head and His hair are black as a raven. But in the first chapter of Revelation His hair was white like snow.

Now, I don't see any inconsistency. See what I'm saying? But I really believe it has real color. If you don't believe, that's your misfortune, that's all.

Because the heaven I'm looking forward to is a lot more interesting than the one you're looking forward to. I believe God really has a right hand and a left. Otherwise, I don't know why there's so much emphasis on the fact that Jesus sits at His right hand and not His left.

It would be meaningless. All right. Now, having said that, I want you to look with me in Revelation 11, verse 19.

Now this is speaking about something in the book of Revelation which, of course, you know there are different ways of interpreting Revelation. You may have discovered that or you may not. But it says at a certain point in this unfolding revelation, the temple of God which is in heaven was opened and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple.

There were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. So, there is the temple of God in heaven. And in it was the ark of His covenant.

Now, I believe the ark that Moses constructed on earth was simply a copy, but a very exact copy, of the ark that's in heaven. There's a lot of fascinating thoughts, like in the 28th chapter of Ezekiel which is the second half of the chapter, is a picture of Satan. It says, Thou wast the anointed cherub that covered.

Covered what? Maybe the mercy seat. Who knows? But in the ark that Moses designed, there were two cherubs. One at either end.

And they faced one another. And their wings stretched out over and met in the middle. And this is just a supposition, but the problem with Satan was he was so beautiful and so wise that he became proud and fell.

So after his fall, who knows if God said, We'll never make that mistake again. From now on there'll be two cherubs. And each of them will look at the other and know that there's someone just as beautiful as he is.

No, I'm not saying that's right, but that's one possible explanation. I believe that in this ark in heaven, there's a covenant. Of which the covenant on earth is simply a representation.

I believe that God the Father made an eternal covenant with Jesus Christ the Son before time began. It's amazing to me, I wouldn't have thought about it that way. But it says in the first chapter of Titus that God promised salvation before time began.

To whom did He promise it? That's a matter of consideration. But I believe God the Father was committed to Jesus Christ the Son by a covenant that was made between them before creation took place. The Father said, If we make creation and take the risk of making man, what will we do about it? The Son said, If man sins, I'll become his substitute.

The Father said, If you become his substitute and pay his penalty, I promise you I'll raise you from the dead. And they made a covenant. Now, you can believe that or not, but I think there's much evidence in Scripture that something like that took place.

Let's look at one other passage in Revelation. Revelation 15, verses 5-8. And after these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened.

Notice, it's the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony. So, in a sense, everything's centered around the temple. The temple centered around the tabernacle, and the tabernacle centered around the ark of the covenant, the testimony.

So, in a certain sense, all God's dealings in eternity and time center around His covenant. I wish you'd got three hands. Then I'd have 15 minutes instead of 10.

I haven't even started. All right, we're going on. Revelation 15, verse 6. And the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple clothed in linen, clean and bright.

Now, I believe it was clean, bright linen. I mean, you're free to believe what you like. Girded around their breasts with golden girdles.

I don't believe there's any inflation in heaven. I don't believe God ever has a financial crisis if He wants gold, He's got gold. If He wants pearls, He wants pearl.

Whatever it is, it's available. He just orders it. Verse 7. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. I'm reading those passages, first of all, because they impress me. I think I'm probably getting to that stage in life where I'm more interested in heaven than some of you.

Because I'm probably likely to be going there before some of you. But I tell you, heaven for me is a very real place. A few years ago, I was really concerned about my own spiritual condition.

And I asked God to make heaven more real to me. Because I believe heaven is the home of every child of God. And I've never met a child that didn't have a pretty clear idea about its own home.

They may not know the street outside, but they know the home. And I think one of the marks of God's children is that we feel at home in relationship to heaven. This earth is beautiful, this life is exciting.

By the grace of God, I'm doing well. But this is not my final resting place. As a matter of fact, that's one of the themes of Hebrews we'll come to especially in the 11th chapter.

The great saints of God were looking ahead out of time into eternity. And they had some glimpses. It wasn't going to be a jump into the unknown.

They had some clear revelation of what they could expect. And I'm looking forward to the temple, I'm looking forward to the angels, I'm looking forward to the four living creatures. There's a whole lot of other things I'm looking forward to.

The sea of glass mingled with crystal. I think that's going to be very exciting. No dull moments in heaven.

I used to think as a boy, what do they do all the time up in heaven? Really, my picture was people sitting there in white clothes playing harps all the time. I thought that's going to become monotonous after a while. But I wasn't in danger of being bored because I certainly wasn't qualified for heaven at that time.

All right. We're coming now to... We're turning back to Hebrews chapter 8. I was wondering whether there was enough material in this outline to last for 40 minutes. I see there is.

Hebrews chapter 8. We're coming back to verse 6, which in a way sums up some things that have been said. Verse 6. But now, He, that is Jesus, has obtained a more excellent priestly ministry. You need to put in both words.

Insofar as He is the mediator of a better covenant, which is legislated... What does it say? Establish? Enacted, probably. Yes. Which is enacted upon better promises.

So there we have the introduction to the comparison between the old and the new covenant. And notice, in the introduction the writer affirms three ways in which it was superior. It's there in your outline.

First of all, Jesus has a more excellent ministry. Second, He's the mediator of a better covenant. And third, it's enacted on better promises.

So you see the three points of superiority. A more excellent ministry, a better covenant, and better promises. I hope you realize that.

When I think of some of the things the Israelites had under their own covenant, I wonder how much better ours really is. I mean, God brought about three million Israelites out of Egypt after several generations of slavery and deprivation, and there was not one sick person among them. You found three million Christians and you found two and three quarter million sick people.

I mean, it really is true. I know from experience, ministering to the sick, you can get a group of Christians, eighty percent of them at least will come forward for healing. Now I don't say that to be critical, but I just wonder whether we're really enjoying all the benefits of our covenant.

Or is it because we don't realize how superior this covenant is? All right, we'll go on just a little further. We'll read verses 7 and 8, and then we'll stop at the quotation from Jeremiah. My wife will please make a note where we're stopping so I'll remember.

Verse 7. For if that first one had been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second. If the first covenant had done everything that was needed, why ever replace it with a second? So there must have been something inadequate in the first covenant. But blaming them... That's the Israelites.

God says, and then we come into this promise quoted from Jeremiah 31, that God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. Now, we can just bring out this one point, which we'll have to go on with in the next session next time. The fault was not in the law.

God didn't blame the law, He blamed them. The fault was in the people. The people were such by nature that they could not receive what was offered them through the law.

Not because there was anything wrong with the law. We look at passages where Paul affirms this again and again. The law is just and holy and good.

The problem is not in the law, it's in the people who try to live by the law. Now, I want to take the rest of this session just to point out seven scriptural facts about praise. There are many more, but I feel these are significant.

And they will help to build your faith. First of all, let's turn to Psalm 22, verse 3. Which are words addressed to the Lord. Now, my version says, But you are holy who inhabit the praises of Israel.

But the Hebrew word that's translated inhabit is also the word for to sit on. As a matter of fact, when people in Israel ask Ruth and me, Where do we live? We answer in Hebrew, We are sitting in Jerusalem. That's the standard Hebrew word for to dwell.

And so, although it's perfectly correct to say, But you are holy who dwell in the praises of Israel. It also means you who sit upon the praises of Israel. What kind of seat does God sit on? A throne.

So there are versions that say, You are holy who are enthroned on the praises of Israel. So when we praise God, as there's a very popular song today that says, We are building a throne for Him to come and take His place amongst us. It's appropriate that as a king He be offered a throne.

But He's very gracious. He's not demanding. He will come amongst us.

But we won't recognize His kingship until we give Him the throne of our praise. So from now on, whenever you come together and begin to praise God, picture yourself offering Jesus an appropriate throne for Him to sit upon as king. You are holy who are enthroned on the praises of Israel, of God's people.

And then another psalm, Psalm 106, verse 47. Praise is one main purpose for which God blesses us. And it brings us into His victory.

Incidentally, let me point out about the psalms. The Hebrew name is Tehillim, which means praises. That's the title of the book.

And if you've studied the Bible, much the longest book in the Bible is Psalms. And its title is praises. So in a way, that's one major element in the total revelation of God, is His praises.

And if you find it difficult to praise God, I suggest you take a lot of time reading the psalms. And if you can, read them out loud, even when you're alone. Just read them and say, Lord, this is my prayer.

I'm reading this to you. It was a prayer given by the Holy Spirit through the psalmist. I'm reading it.

And I believe you'll find after a little while, praise will become much more natural to you. You'll cultivate the habit of praise. Anyhow, let's look at what the psalmist says here.

Psalm 106, verse 47. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the Gentiles, to give thanks to your name and to triumph in your praise. Notice again the same order, thanks and then praise.

And so when we praise God, we triumph. Now, a triumph in the ancient culture of Rome and the ancient world, was not the winning of a victory. It was the celebration of a victory that had already been won.

And so when we really praise God, we're not asking Him for victory. We're celebrating the fact that the victory has already been won. We join His triumph.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, Thanks be to God. And notice the word thanks. Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ.

You see, a triumphal procession is the celebration of a victory... in which the victorious general was led through the streets of Rome... in a chariot led by a white horse. And all the people were on the sidewalks or the pavements appraising him. And all his captives, all the enemies whom he had defeated, were being laid in chains behind him.

That's the picture. And where do we belong? We're not being laid in chains behind him. We're not even on the sidewalk or the pavement praising him.

Where are we? In the chariot, that's right. How do we get into the chariot? By praising him, that's right. That's the step into the chariot.

Then again in Psalm 30. It's significant how many of these passages are taken from the Psalms. Psalm 30, verses 11 and 12.

Now, just about 13 years ago I lost my first wife, which was the hardest experience of my life. And I want to say that Psalm 11 is really true. It works.

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing. You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness. Now, the next verse gives the purpose.

To the end that my glory may sing praise to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever. Notice when God takes off the sackcloth and delivers us from our mourning, He does it for a purpose.

What's the purpose? To the end that our glory may give praise to Him. Now, what is our glory? Don't speculate because I'll give you an answer direct out of Scripture. Very important.

You've got to put two passages of Scripture together. Psalm 16 and verse 9. Where the psalmist says, Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. My flesh also will rest in hope.

Again, my glory. Now, a lot of different versions translate it differently. But in Acts chapter 2 and verse 26, the apostle Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, quotes Psalm 16, verse 9. But, he interprets the word glory.

So you have there, this is Acts 2, 26. Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad. So what is your glory? Your tongue.

You know why it's your glory? You know why God gave you a tongue? To praise Him. That's right. It's the supreme member with which we can praise God.

It's our glory. And in a certain sense, any use of your tongue that doesn't glorify God is a misuse. Because He put it there for you to glorify Him.

And it is your glory when you use it to glorify Him. And then we'll turn to Isaiah 61 and verse 3. And again, this is a message for those who've been mourning and depressed. It was through this verse that the Lord

many years ago delivered me from a spirit of depression.

To console those who mourn in Zion. To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness. And that's what God delivered me from, the Spirit of heaviness.

And so on. But notice, the garment of praise in place of the Spirit of heaviness. So if you don't want to be depressed, and you don't want Satan to come to you with his dark forebodings and evil thoughts, put on the garment of praise and he won't come near you.

I think I have time to relate this little story. Many, many years ago when I was pastoring a small congregation in Bayswater, there were two Russian Jewish sisters who'd made their way miraculously out of Soviet Russia. And had met the Lord and been filled with the Holy Spirit.

They used to come and visit my first wife and me and we'd pray together. I tell you, they were noisier as Russian Baptists than most Pentecostals are in the West. I mean, they knew how to praise the Lord.

We were there just having a wonderful time, the four of us praising the Lord together. And there was a ring at the door and a lady who was a member of the church. I went down there, there she was.

And she was leading a man down by the hand. She said, This is my husband, he's just come out of prison. He has a demon, will you pray for him? Well, in those days I stayed a long way away from demons.

I mean, I didn't know what to do with them and I was very embarrassed. I had no idea what to do. Well, I said, Come up, we're praying.

That's all I could think. So we just went on praying. And we were really, you know, we were making a noise.

And this man came up to me, carefully, and he said, I don't like this, too much noise, I'm going. And God inspired my answer. I said, Listen, it's the devil that doesn't like the noise because we're praising Jesus.

And he hates that. Now I said, You've got two options. If you go now, the devil will go with you.

If you stay, the devil will go without you. He said, I'll stay. And about ten minutes later he just came up to me and said, It's gone.

He said, I felt it leave my throat. I never forget that because it's such a demonstration of how praise... embarrasses the devil much more than he can embarrass us. So if you're tempted to be depressed or moody or unhappy, put on the garment of praise in place of the Spirit of heaviness.

I know it works because it worked for me. In Psalm 33.1 the psalmist says, Praise is beautiful for the upright. It's a beautiful garment of your spirit.

And then in Jeremiah 33.11 we have another aspect of praise or thanksgiving, and both words are used, which is important. It's speaking about the restoration of God's people. And it speaks about what will be heard in the streets of Jerusalem.

There's a beautiful modern Hebrew song based on these words. But it says, The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say, Praise

the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever. Notice, two of the three reasons are there.

And of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. I think other versions say the sacrifice of thanksgiving. It's important to understand praise is a sacrifice.

It costs you something. It's not always easy. And the time that's most important to praise the Lord is when you least feel like it.

Do not let your feelings dictate to you. It's the Word of God that tells you what to do, even if it goes absolutely contrary to your feelings. Hebrews 13 brings this out.

Hebrews 13, verses 15 and 16. Therefore by Him, that is Jesus, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

How much should we praise God? How often? It says continually, never stop. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. So praise, or thanksgiving, is a sacrifice.

And it's most acceptable to God when it costs us most. When everything in the situation seems to be against us, that's the time to praise God the most. In faith, it's a sacrifice.

And then Psalm 8, verse 2. Praise is a spiritual weapon. This is one of my favorite scriptures. I don't know how often I get here.

Somehow it's difficult for me to preach long without getting to Psalm 8, verse 2. Out of the mouths of babes and infants, you, that is the Lord, have ordained strength because of your enemies, that you may silence the enemy and the avenger. So God has enemies. That's important to know that.

And He has one particular enemy He's called the enemy and the avenger. Who's that? Satan. And He says there is a way to silence Satan.

I was preaching in Lausanne in Switzerland with a French interpreter some years ago. I got to this verse. I understand French.

And I listened to my interpreter and in French it says, God imposes silence on the devil. And I've never forgotten that. God imposes silence.

He says, Shut up. When? When we praise God. You see, our praise silences the devil.

Why do we need to silence the devil? What is he doing all the time, night and day? He's accusing us. You say to God, Well, why don't you silence the devil? God says, Because I've given you the weapon with which to do it. Now in Psalm 8.2 it says, You've ordained strength.

But again, the New Testament is the commentary on the old. Turn to Matthew 21.16. Matthew 21.16. We have to read verse 15. This is in the last week of the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem.

But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were indignant, and said to Him, Do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, now He's quoting Psalm 8.2. Yes, have you never read, out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, you have perfected praise? So when the psalmist said, You

have ordained strength, Jesus said, You have perfected praise. What does that tell us? The ordained strength of God's people is perfect praise. And it doesn't matter how weak we are.

The weapon is irresistible. So the psalmist chooses the example of the weakest. Babies and nursing infants.

It says even they, when they praise God, impose silence on the enemy. To me it is a wonderful, exciting joy to know that we can silence the devil. In our previous session we looked at the total opposition between the flesh and the spirit.

We saw that there's no reconciliation between them. And for that reason, God's plan of redemption is to put to death the old fleshly nature and to bring into being a totally new nature by His Holy Spirit within us. And although God has made total provision for this, I pointed out to you that it has to be worked out in our lives.

And so we have to put to death the deeds of the body. That's not something that God does for us. He's given us the legal right.

He's given us the authority and the power. We have to exercise it. You know it says of those who are born through receiving Jesus, in John chapter 1, to them God gave authority to become children of God.

It's very important to see that when you're born again, what you get is authority. And you don't become any more through the new birth than you become by exercising the authority which God has given you. Authority is useless if it isn't exercised.

So really the new birth is just a potential. It's the opportunity to develop into something wonderful if you'll use the authority. But if all you do is keep telling everybody you're born again and never take any intelligent attempts to exercise authority in a scriptural way over the problems that confront you and the sins that still beset you in your own life, you'll make no progress at all.

So Paul says we have to move out of one way of thinking, one area of living, the flesh, and into a totally different one. And we need the help of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is willing to help us.

He comes to this conclusion. For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these and these only are sons of God. And then he reminds us in verse 15 of chapter 8, we have not become slaves again.

We haven't come under a spirit of slavery, and that's legalism. He's contrasting Sinai with Golgotha. Sinai, they were frightened.

They backed off from the mountain. They said we don't want to hear that voice again. But God doesn't want to make slaves.

He wants to make sons who are motivated by love and respect and who cry out, Abba, Father. And in this the Spirit helps us because He bears witness that we are the children of God. Everyone that is born of God has the witness in himself.

If you don't have that witness, you need to check whether you're really born of God. I say that because I've been on mission field with missionaries who didn't know what it was to be born again. They were sincere, good living people.

But it's quite different to have the supernatural testament of the Holy Spirit that you are a child of God. If the Holy Spirit tells you you're a child of God, it really doesn't matter much what other people say. He's the one that matters.

Now Paul goes on in verse 17, and this is important. If we are children, then we are also heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

I prefer to say joint heirs because according to the laws of inheritance it doesn't mean that every one of us gets a little part of that inheritance but it means we all share the total inheritance together. That's a tremendous statement. We are heir to all that Jesus is heir to because we're his younger brothers.

But there's a condition, and a lot of people don't ever read the condition. At the end of verse 17, if indeed we suffer with him in order that we may be also glorified together. So our inheritance depends on our willingness to suffer with him.

You cannot become an heir of God without being willing to face suffering. If you reject the suffering, I don't believe you can claim your inheritance. We're heirs of God if indeed we suffer with him.

There's a certain tendency in the church today to dismiss suffering as something that doesn't belong to the Christian life. I can't think where people find that in the Bible. There are countless statements in the Bible that tell us the exact opposite.

Let's go on then and consider the nature and the purpose of suffering, which is something that every one of us partakes of in some degree. Paul says now in the next verse, I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. And coming from Paul, that's a rather impressive statement.

If you consider what he suffered, I want to read the list for a moment. It's found in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 25 and following. It says this, verse 23.

Talking about people who claim to be servants of Christ. Are they servants of Christ? I speak as if insane. I more so.

Far more labors, far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. I understand that means 195 lashes altogether.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked.

A night and a day I've spent in the deep. And we don't need to go any further. The remarkable thing is in the same epistle, a little earlier on, he says our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory.

So, what are you complaining about, brother? How heavy is your affliction compared with Paul? And Paul said his affliction was a light affliction. And here in Romans he says the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. What made the difference with Paul was that he had a vision of the glory.

If we lose the vision of the glory, we won't benefit from our sufferings. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4, 17, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which

are seen are temporary, the things which are not seen are eternal.

So, suffering will work God's purposes in you while you're looking at the things which are not seen. See, Paul had a vision of the unseen glory. And nothing he suffered was worthy to be compared with the glory he saw in the future.

But if we lose the vision of the eternal, we'll still suffer. But we'll get no benefit from it. Going back to Romans 8. Now he comes to one of the most profound passages, I believe, in the New Testament, in the Bible.

Verse 19. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. What he's saying, I understand, is this.

We're not the only ones that are suffering. The whole creation is suffering because of our sin. Because it was man's sin that plunged creation into chaos and futility.

And the creation will not be redeemed until we are redeemed. So the whole creation is waiting for us. That's a tremendous statement.

Let me read that again. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For us to be revealed in our resurrection glory.

That's what the creation is waiting for. You see, I find that creation is a lot more alive to the promises of God than many Christians. I'd like to turn to two Psalms briefly.

Psalms 96, 11 through 13. Psalm 96, 11 through 13.

Let the heavens be glad. Let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar and all it contains.

Let the field exult and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the Lord for He is coming. All nature is anticipating the coming of the Lord.

Basically, except the church. The church is asleep. The trees are awake.

The mountains are awake. The lakes are awake. The animals are awake.

And the church is sleeping. We're out of harmony with God and with creation. Look again in Psalm 97, verses 7 through 9. Am I right? 98.

Thank you for helping me. Let the sea roar and all it contains. That excites me because Jesus said right at the end of His age men's hearts will fail them for fear and for the things that are coming upon the earth, for the roaring of the sea.

So, as the Lord's coming is imminent, the sea is going to get so excited it's going to roar and frighten the unbelievers. That's something. Let the sea roar and all it contains.

The world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Have you ever pictured the rivers clapping their hands? Let the mountains sing together for joy.

What's it all about? Before the Lord for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. All creation is longing for the Lord to come and put things right.

You see, man was made the steward of the earth. But after His fall, man raped the earth. He's left the earth in many areas desolate, stripped, bare, exploited.

And the earth is crying out to God, how long are you going to let these people trample over us and tear us up, defile us, and fill our atmosphere with that horrible pollution? Can you picture that? See, the trouble with most of us is we're so self-centered. You know, somebody said the typical prayer of the average church member is God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife. Us four, no more, amen.

Paul is drawing us into an experience where we empathize with the whole of creation. Oh, that our hearts would be enlarged. Going on, verse 20.

For the creation was subjected to futility. The old King James says vanity, emptiness. I think perhaps in a way the contemporary word would be frustration.

For the creation was subjected to futility, vanity, creation, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creature or creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Notice, it's only when the children of God come into the freedom of their glory that creation will be set free. Now, look back for a moment in Genesis chapter 3 and just see the root Scripture here.

After man's sin. Genesis 3. God's pronouncement of judgment for the sin of man. Genesis 3:17. Then to Adam God said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying you shall not eat from it, cursed is the ground because of you.

Have you ever pondered on that? Man was the steward of the whole earth. He was answerable to God. And his fall brought disaster on all that he was responsible for.

See, this principle of responsibility is one we run away from today. But the fact is, we are responsible before God for certain things. Parents are responsible for their children.

How many of you agree if parents fail, children suffer? They don't deserve it, but it comes because of the failure of the steward who was over them. The same principle applies to the whole earth. God sent Adam over the whole earth.

He said you'll subdue the earth, you'll rule over it. It's under your stewardship. But when he fell, it brought a disastrous consequence upon the whole earth.

See how much we're responsible for. It's a frightening thought. At least it is to me.

Now listen. Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. What is the mark of the curse, the visible mark? Two things, thorns and thistles. Who provided redemption from the curse? Jesus.

Have you ever noticed that they gave him a crown of thorns and they gave him a purple robe which is the color of the thistle? That was God's attestation that Jesus was redeeming the earth from its curse. But the redemption will not come till man's redemption is complete. Let's go back to Romans chapter 8. The creation itself of verse 21 also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Verse 22, for we know, and this is another of those places where I think most of us don't know. But we should know. We know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Did you know that? And listen, how do we respond to it? Not only this, but also we ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. Now let me ask you frankly, and I could ask myself the same question. Is that true of you? Do you ever have this experience of the Holy Spirit groaning within you, not for some problem in your life, but for the redemption of creation? Do you ever empathize with this creation on which we men and women brought such terrible consequences by ourselves and continue those consequences? We haven't acted as stewards of the earth.

We've acted as exploiters of the earth. Our selfishness and our greed are rapidly ruining this earth. But we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit should have a totally different attitude.

We should have, I would call the word, empathy with the earth, with its groaning, sharing its groaning, sharing its longing. What is it longing for? Redemption. When will redemption come? When Jesus comes back.

What will happen to us? Our bodies will be changed. That will be the redemption of our body. You see, Paul says very clearly at the end of verse 23, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

It is a heresy to teach that this will happen before the resurrection. At the resurrection, our bodies will be redeemed. I think I need to read to you Philippians chapter 3. I look at your faces and I see that we're moving in an area that you're not very familiar with.

You see, the end of the Christian life is not to get to heaven. That's just a stage in the journey. The end of the Christian life, the goal of the Christian life, is the resurrection.

And only then will our redemption be complete because then the redemption of our bodies will be complete. If all you're aiming to do is to get to heaven, you're stopping short of God's goal. Philippians 3, verse 10 through 12.

This is Paul's life aim. That I may know him. You think Paul had never met the Lord? You know he had.

But he said there's a whole lot more of the Lord that I don't know yet and I want to know it. That I may know him. And the power of his resurrection, how many of you can say amen to that? But what about the next sentence? And the fellowship of his suffering.

Can you understand that? That was his goal. See, something's impelling me to warn you again and again. If you think you're going to escape a suffering, you're going to escape everything.

You'll miss it all. You'll not be an heir. When I read this I think of something in my own life.

Why did Paul want to share the sufferings of Jesus? Not merely his power but his sufferings. I think he didn't want Jesus to suffer alone. See, when my first wife died, which was now 13 years ago, I was due to go away for a conference.

But at the last moment I canceled it. I didn't leave on the Friday. She died on the Sunday afternoon.

And I've always been so grateful that I was there. I could have gone to that conference. She could have died alone.

But it would have been a terrible thing for me. And I think I can explain this to you. That's how Paul felt.

He said, I don't want Jesus to suffer alone. If he has to suffer, I want to be there with him. See, what I'm trying to paint for all of us is a very different conception of what the Christian life really is.

It's not a list of 17 blessings that you get. There's a lot more to it than that. So listen to what Paul says.

That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, letting my old man really experience the death which was accomplished in its execution on the cross. That, in order that, now listen, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. What was his goal? Getting to heaven? No.

Sharing in the resurrection from the dead. Getting to heaven is just a sort of resting stage on the journey. The goal is the resurrection.

And then he says this, and brothers and sisters, if Paul said this, I wonder if we can say less. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect. Are you further along the road than Paul was when he wrote those words? But I press on, in order that I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

What was he pressing on to? The resurrection of the body. Because that's the completion of redemption. Jesus redeemed us, spirit, soul, and body.

But the fully outward redemption won't be manifested till the resurrection. Go to the end of Philippians chapter 3, verse 20 and 21. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is that true of you? Are you eagerly waiting for a Savior? Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power that He has, even to subject all things to Himself. What's going to happen to our bodies when Jesus comes? It's going to be changed into the likeness of the body of His glory. At the present moment we have a body, what the Greek says is a body of humiliation.

And it's the result of the fall. Listen, there's a lot of things about our bodies that we don't need to go into detail, but they constantly humble us. You can wear the finest clothes and the nicest perfume, dear ladies, but if you get hot you're going to sweat.

Is that right? Not just perspire but sweat. And you can eat the finest and most delicate food, but in a little while you're going to have to go to the bathroom. How dignified can you be in the bathroom? Do you understand? We're in a body of humility, of humiliation.

Not humility, humiliation. But when Jesus comes that's all going to end and we're going to get a body like His. John says when we see Him as He is, we shall be like Him.

Now I'm naive enough to believe it means what it says. Now let's go back to Romans chapter 8 quickly. So the whole creation is groaning in pains of childbirth until now.

Now I want to direct you to some words of Jesus as quickly as I can. The Lord helping me. Matthew 19 verse 28.

I want to talk about this regeneration which is not just our personal regeneration but the regeneration of creation. Matthew 19 verse 28. Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me in the regeneration, that means the rebirth, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

There is a rebirth coming which is the rebirth of creation. That's the redemption of creation. And then Jesus said in Matthew 24 verse 8 about the signs that mark the close of the age, but all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

The birth pangs of what? The birth pangs of a new age. And I'm not talking about the new age movement. I hope you know that.

And then He said in Luke 21 verse 28. Luke 21, 28. But when these things, that's what He was describing in Matthew 24, begin to take place.

Straighten up and lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near. Can you see? That's the climax. It's not just our personal redemption, it's the redemption of creation.

And all creation is groaning and birth pangs longing for that. And we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, God's purpose is that we should be groaning together. That we should not be wrapped up in all our little personal problems and church quarrels, but that we should see the glorious vision of what God has in mind and we would give ourselves in prayer to bring it about.

I want to speak about the importance of the resurrection. We cannot overestimate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus. It is the decisive fact of the history of the universe.

The whole history of the universe, not just the human race, revolves around the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. First of all, it was God's vindication of Jesus. Remember, two courts had condemned Him to death.

A secular Roman court, a religious Jewish court. And when He was buried He was under that condemnation. But when He rose, God vindicated His Son.

This is expressed in Romans 1, verses 3 and 4. Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who came of the seed of David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. That's a Jewish phrase of saying the Holy Spirit because actually the Hebrew for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness. Some translators don't realize that Paul was writing in Greek and thinking in Hebrew.

Declared to be the Son of God with power by the Holy Spirit by the resurrection of the dead. So when Jesus came forth out of the tomb God said, I've reversed those unjust decisions. I've vindicated my Son.

He never sinned. There's no cause for death in Him. And by my Holy Spirit I've raised Him up.

It's interesting, I shouldn't go into this too long but all the vital crises of the redemption involve all three persons of the Godhead. The conception of Jesus was by the Father through the Spirit to bring forth the Son. The ministry of Jesus, Peter says, God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power.

The Father anointed the Son with the Spirit. The death of Jesus, it says, He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God. The Son through the Spirit to the Father.

The resurrection of Jesus, the Father by the Spirit raised the Son. And the final statement at Pentecost Jesus received from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit and poured it out on His disciples. You see how totally the triunity of the Godhead is involved in every major stage of redemption.

If I may say it reverently it was like no one of the persons of the Godhead wanted to be left out in this glorious visitation of the human race. God is much more interested in us than we realize. To me that speaks volumes.

The whole Godhead was totally involved in every major phase of the process of redemption. All right, now then. The resurrection of Jesus is the basis for our justification.

If He wasn't raised we'd still be in our sins. Paul says in Romans 4, verse 26, Jesus was delivered up to death for our offenses and was raised for our justification. If He hadn't been raised we could not be justified.

We'd still be in our sins. And then he says about salvation in Romans 10, verses 9 and 10. Romans 10, 9 and 10.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. If you do not believe that God raised Jesus from the dead you cannot be saved.

It is essential for salvation. Unfortunately there are multitudes of professing Christians who don't believe in the physical resurrection. None of them can know the peace and joy of sins forgiven.

No matter what position they may occupy in the church. Then the resurrection is the guarantee of Christ's power to save us. In Hebrews 7 and verse 25 it says this.

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, Jesus, since He ever lives to make intercession for us. If Jesus was still in the tomb how could He save us? But because He's at the right hand of God, because He's atoned for our sins, because all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him He's able to save us to the uttermost. I love that phrase.

Somebody said, From the guttermost to the uttermost. There's no limit to the power of Jesus to save. He has all power.

Then, and this again is very important, the resurrection is the completion of our redemption. Listen, our destination ultimately is not heaven. It's wonderful that we'll be able to go to heaven but that's just a stopping off place.

Because while our spirits are in heaven our bodies will still be moldering in the grave. That's not a complete salvation. Jesus died for the whole person.

His salvation includes spirit, soul and body. And that salvation is not complete. Until the resurrection.

Paul was very clear of this. He says in Philippians 3, verses 10 and following. He says the aim and purpose of His whole life is that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of

His sufferings, being conformed to His death if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

He wasn't concerned about getting to heaven. His ambition was to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Thank God when we die our spirits will go to heaven but that's not the completion of redemption because our bodies are still unredeemed.

Paul set his sights on the resurrection and he said something very powerful. He said, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection. Paul didn't take for granted that he would attain to the resurrection.

Dear brother and sister, you will not drift into the resurrection. If you're drifting you'll end somewhere else. It requires a real solemn commitment and determination.

I'm sorry to say that I meet thousands of Christians who really don't take this sufficiently seriously. If Paul had to say, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection who are you or I to say, Well, we'll get there anyhow? Are we on the same spiritual level as Paul? Probably not. But even Paul didn't take it for granted.

He said again in the next verse, Not that I'm already attained or am already perfected but I press on that I'm in the hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul was single-minded. He said I haven't arrived, I haven't attained at the time that he was speaking. But he said there's one thing I do, I press toward the goal.

I've got one supreme ambition and determination to be there when the dead are raised in Christ. When you think what that's going to be like brothers and sisters, it would be a shame to miss it. It really would.

I mean, it's not possible for our limited minds to conceive the glory and the power that will be released when these weak, corruptible bodies are suddenly and gloriously transformed into a body like that of Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? It is to me. In fact, I just have to stop and ponder over it for a moment.

Romans 8, verse 23, also says this. In other words, salvation isn't complete until the resurrection. Romans 8, verse 23.

It says in verse 22, The whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. And then it says, Not only they but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Now let me ask you, is that true of you? You have the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Are you groaning within yourself? Are you eagerly waiting? What right do you or I have to suppose that God deals with us on a lesser level? The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not given just to have a good time. It's given to prepare us for what lies ahead. I feel such a sense of solemnity right now.

Going back to Romans 11. This is now an exciting verse. Verse 15.

For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Through the rejection of the Jewish people the Gentiles had the opportunity to be reconciled with God. When the Jews are reconciled themselves what will it be but life from the dead? That's a profound

statement. Tell you what I see, you may not agree.

I see a Gentile civilization committing suicide. I see the civilization that we're in today committing suicide. Destroying the earth, destroying ourselves, building armaments that can wipe out the human race 250 times over.

What's going to change it? I believe the restoration of Israel to their Messiah. I believe that's going to produce cosmic changes. I believe that's the hope of the earth.

If I'm right, and I don't ask you to believe I'm right, but if I'm right you'll see how important this message is. How desperately necessary it is for Gentile Christians to see what's involved in the restoration of the Jewish people because it's in our best interests. We are never going to get what God intended the whole world to have until the Jews are back in their place and back in a right relationship with the Lord.

I believe there's a kind of principle that every nation has its right place. And only when nations are in their right place will things go right with the earth. And the first nation that God begins with is always Israel.

When Israel are back in their right place and in a right relationship with God then everything else on earth will get sorted out. Until then there's going to be confusion. That's my understanding of this Scripture.

We'll move on. Then it says in verse 16, If the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also. And if the root be holy, the branches are too.

That's taken from the ceremonies of the Lord Moses. If you dedicate something to the Lord by offering a little piece of it to the Lord, the whole thing is holy. So, if a little firstfruits of the Jewish people have been offered to the Lord that means the whole nation is holy.

It may have lost its holiness but it's potentially there. And then Paul goes in verse 17. If some of the branches were broken off and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches.

But if you are arrogant, remember it is not you who supports the root but the root supports you. That's so important at this time. Paul is writing now specifically to believers from a Gentile background.

And he says, Remember, it's not your olive tree. The olive tree is God's people from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob upwards. You didn't belong in that olive tree.

But some of the branches were unbelieving and got broken off and you've been grafted in among them. But bear in mind, you don't support the tree, the tree supports you. Don't be arrogant toward the Jewish people.

If you look at the history of the church, especially in Europe you'd have to say that instruction just got left out because the attitude of the church, primarily in Europe but not exclusively, has been one of almost unbridled arrogance toward the Jewish people from about the fifth century onward. It's a pity that they didn't read the letter to the Romans. And I have to say it's a particular pity that the Roman church didn't read the letter to the Romans.

Because history would have been very different. All right, going on. Verse 19.

You will say then branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. They fell, they were unbelieving and here am I, I'm a believer, I'm in the tree. Well, Paul says that's true, quite right.

They were broken off for their unbelief and you stand only by your faith. Do not be conceited but fear. I wonder if the church has got that message.

Do not be conceited but fear. Why? For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. You remember what the requirement for the kingdom is? What is it? Fruit.

No fruit, you forfeit the kingdom. God has got no... He's not a respecter of persons. Israel forfeited the kingdom because they didn't bring forth the fruit.

Any group on earth that does not bring forth the fruit will forfeit the kingdom. Is that a real danger for some sections of the church? I would have to say it's a very real, imminent danger. Now we come to verse 22.

Behold then the kindness and severity of God to those who fell, severity. But to you, Gentile believer, God's kindness if you continue in His kindness otherwise you also will be cut off. Very plain language.

You stand by faith as long as you bring the fruit. But if you cease to live in faith and if you fail to bring forth the fruit you will be cut off just as much as the Jewish branches were cut off. And then he comes back to... I want to say a bit more as behold or consider the kindness and severity of God.

There is a great deal of preaching today which speaks only about the kindness of God and doesn't deal at all with the severity of God. It's like a coin which has two sides. One side is kindness, the other side is severity.

But you know that if you deface one side of a coin, the coin becomes valueless. And if we present a message of God that speaks only at His kindness and not at His severity, it's a valueless coin. It has no more value.

We've got to be faithful to God. I was in a meeting in Southeast Asia with Ruth two or three years ago and the message was basically on healing. An American preacher, a man I know, a man I respect and a man I love, was an excellent message on how to be healed for people that knew the Bible and believed in Jesus.

But at the end, to this large group of mainly Chinese people, he said, Now if you want all these blessings, come forward and we pray for you. Not one word was spoken about repentance. Most of them were involved in idol worship.

They had all sorts of charms and talismans on them. Nothing was said about that. And then Ruth and I, being amongst the people on the platform, got turned loose to pray for them.

I'll tell you, it was confusion. Because first of all, we couldn't communicate with them in their own language and secondly, they hadn't met the conditions. So simply to say, Come forward and get blessed, even if it's said with the best intentions and the kindest heart, is to create confusion.

Because you cannot keep one foot in Satan's kingdom and one foot in the kingdom of God and be blessed. You become a split personality. Is that negative preaching? I've heard that kind of preaching dismissed as negative.

It's not negative. It's just the other side of the coin. Remember, there are two sides to the coin.

God's kindness and His severity. All right, going on. Verse 23.

And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief now this is the Jewish people, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. So that's a very positive statement.

They are not excluded forever. And then it goes on, now addressing the Gentile. Please bear in mind that I'm a Gentile.

For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? You see, that gives us pause for thought. I am not by any means an expert in horticulture. There may be somebody here who is.

But the principle of grafting as I understand it is, you take an uncultivated stalk and you graft in a fruitful branch. And so the life of the uncultivated stalk then flows through the fruitful branch and brings forth fruit. But Paul says what God has done in getting the Gentiles in is contrary to nature.

Because He's taken an unfruitful branch and grafted it into a fruitful stalk which is contrary to all principles of grafting. Is that right? Somebody know something about grafting? Am I speaking correctly? Yeah. So, we were unfruitful branches and contrary to nature God grafted us into the fruitful olive tree which is God's historic people going back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

What Paul is saying is if God could do that for uncultivated branches it's much easier for Him to graft the cultivated branches back again. You see what he's saying? That should encourage those of us who are praying for Israel because it's much more of a miracle that Gentiles get saved than that Jews get saved. Jews are just getting back into their own tree.

Gentiles are being put into a tree that they never belonged to. Can you accept that? It's true whether you can accept it or not but I'm aware that in a way it's rather different from the usual emphasis. I have a background, a long background in various sections of the church and I was part of a movement, I still am in a sort of way where we were taught we've got it all.

I am so tired of that phrase. Please don't use that to me again. I remember I was in a little Pentecostal church in Denmark and this dear, precious widow who was poor and sick and really depressed said in Danish, she said, Vi har jo det hela, we've got it all.

And I looked at her and I said, Dear Lord, if that is all, it isn't much. No, I really was concerned for the woman but I thought, Lord, if that's all, I'm really not excited. Brothers and sisters, we don't have more than a small fraction of what God has for us.

We're just paddling in the margin of a vast ocean. Let's not deceive ourselves by telling us we've got it all. We've got the full gospel.

Well, what are we doing with it? I tell people every now and then they say to me, I got it all when I was born again. I say, Well, if you've got it all, where is it all? Let's see it. Just don't tell us, show us.

That's a very dangerous attitude. I've had to kind of preach myself out of it because I was brought up in that particular section that we've got it all, we've got the full gospel. Dear Lord.

Now we're coming to something exciting which is God's program to close the age. There are various different passages of Scripture which deal with this but here in the end of the eleventh chapter of Romans from verse 25 onwards Paul outlines very briefly certain things that must take place as the age comes to a close. He says first of all in verse 25, I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed.

The old King James Version said ignorant. Some people have read it, I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren. But anyhow, Paul, God sets no premium on ignorance.

It's interesting if you read the writings of the apostles how many times they were struggling with ignorance. And I don't think I ever realized the power of ignorance until I went to Pakistan and preached there with the eighty percent of women illiterate, sixty-some percent of men illiterate, without any background in western knowledge or truth or science or the Bible. And preaching to them it was like there was a great, vast wall of ignorance.

And it seemed so hopeless to break through that wall. The power of God did break through. I think in about one week we had about 8,000 people that stood to pray the sinner's prayer.

I'm not saying they all got saved but they all stood to pray the prayer and one-third of them were probably Muslims. But I never had appreciated the awful darkness of ignorance until I'd been there. And then I came back and I saw how many times the apostles were fighting against ignorance, ignorance, ignorance.

God sets no premium on ignorance. I'm not talking about education. Education is a two-edged sword.

It's partly good and partly not. But ignorance is a terrible evil. And you don't have to attend a university to be set free from ignorance, let me tell you that.

All right, going back to verse 25. I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery. Now a mystery in the New Testament is something that has been kept secret by God but is now opened up.

So a mystery needs no longer to be mysterious, you understand? A mystery is one of God's secrets which He's seen fit to reveal to us in the church age. I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery. Now here's the mystery.

But first of all, lest you be wise in your own estimation, work through this chapter on your own and see how many times Paul warns against arrogance and conceit. It's very interesting. Now here is the mystery.

That a partial hardening has happened to Israel. It's never been a total hardening. As I said, there have always been Jews in every generation who have acknowledged Jesus as their Messiah.

It's always been only partial. A partial hardening has happened to Israel. And then we get to the word until.

And wherever the Bible speaks about God's rejection of Israel it always follows with a phrase like until. In other words, it is not permanent. Until the fullness, I prefer to say the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

So, the full restoration of Israel will not take place until every single Gentile whom God has foreknown and chosen has heard and responded to the gospel. You see, it's the last of first and the first of last. Israel were the first but they lost their place.

So, the message was sent out to all other nations and Israel alas! Only when all other nations have responded will Israel come back in their fullness. Ruth and I were talking to a married couple a few years ago. The husband was a Presbyterian, the wife was Jewish and was not a believer in Jesus but very sympathetic.

They'd heard some of my teaching on this theme and they had a meal with us and they said, Now, is this what you believe? So I explained to them, basically I felt that the gospel had to be proclaimed to every nation. Every people, tribe and tongue have got to hear the gospel before the full restoration of Israel can take place. And this Jewish lady looked at me and she said, Well, I wish you'd get on with the job.

She got the message. Unfortunately, at that time at least, she didn't receive the full message of the Messiah. So, see, our ministry as Ruth was describing it earlier, we've got a foot in both camps.

Because we are to the best of our ability, doing everything we can to proclaim the good news of the kingdom to every nation on earth, to every language group, to every tribal group. We can't do it but we can equip those who can do it. But at the same time, we have a home in Jerusalem which is our faith statement that Israel is going to be restored.

So, there we are. I believe both. I believe the full gospel, I mean I really mean the full gospel, has got to come to every nation on earth.

And I believe at the same time the Holy Spirit is preparing the hearts of the Jewish people as never before for nineteen centuries to turn back to their Messiah. When I was in Israel in 1948 when the nation was born, if you talked to some Jewish people about Jesus they would turn around and spit. That was their reaction.

But since the Six Day War in 1967, basically there has been a dramatic change in the attitude of the Jewish people to Jesus. Somebody told me more books proportionately are written about Jesus in Israel than in any other nation today. And we have friends on this sort of upper level of Jerusalem society.

A lawyer, an architect, an engineer. And when they come to us, we give them a cup of coffee or whatever it may be, they'll sit around and sit and sit. And we say to ourselves, Why don't they go? And you know why? Because they're waiting for us to tell them about miracles.

How God answers our prayers. And as long as you want to talk to Jewish people about the supernatural, they will listen. The Jews require a sign, a supernatural sign.

But that wouldn't have been true forty years ago. There's a change. For many, many centuries, you know the Hebrew word for Jesus is Yeshua.

And the last letter is that ah, which is called an ayin in Hebrew. They would never write that letter. They would call Him Yeshua.

He's the Gentile Messiah, He doesn't belong to us. Today, the name Yeshua is being used widely again amongst the Jewish people. You can't realize what a revolution that is until you know how many centuries it's not been happening.

So let me say this. The gospel of the kingdom is going to be proclaimed to every nation. Jesus said it would.

This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed to every nation on earth. If He said it will, it will. No matter what the devil does, no matter what the politicians say, no matter how the experts pontificate, it will be proclaimed to every nation on earth.

And at the same time, God is preparing the heart of the Jewish people. And I personally believe that when they turn, ultimately it will be in one day. Just like the nation politically was born in one day, the nation will be reborn in one day.

I also personally believe that Jesus will have a personal interview with His Jewish people. If you listen to the testimonies of Jewish people who found the Messiah, most of them have come to Him by a direct personal revelation. Jesus is a little jealous, I think.

He says, I want the privilege of revealing myself to my brothers. And I personally am inclined to believe from prophecies in Ezekiel and Hosea that there's going to be a rendezvous between Jesus and the Jewish remnant somewhere, maybe in the Negev, who knows. And He's going to reveal Himself to them.

Just as Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, there's the most beautiful parallel in the story of Joseph. I don't know whether you think about it. Joseph was alienated from his brothers, abandoned.

They thought he died, he was in Egypt. And he became totally Egyptianized. He dressed like an Egyptian, he spoke Egyptian.

There was no evidence that he was still Jewish. But in the hour of their need his brothers had to come to him and fulfill the dream which had made them so angry years before. They bowed down before him.

And they were talking Hebrew to one another. They didn't know that Joseph understood. But he understood everything they said.

He put them through all sorts of things to bring them to the place of total dependence on him. And then, it says, he could restrain himself no longer. And he sent all the Egyptians out of the house.

And then he revealed himself and he said, I'm Jewish. See, that's what's happened to Jesus. As far as the Jewish people are concerned, He's become totally gentitized.

They don't see Him as a Jew at all. For most Jewish people, Jesus is a statue that Christians worship in the church. And they don't like it.

But that's changing. God is softening their hardened hearts, preparing them. A gentle rain of the Holy Spirit is beginning to fall.

And it's softening that hard soil that has been unresponsive for centuries. Now if you want to be excited, get excited about that. I'll tell you something that happened to me just recently when we were in this summer in Jerusalem.

I was awake about 2 a.m. in the morning. I wasn't troubled about anything, I was just awake. And I suddenly got the impression that I was experiencing what Jesus was experiencing.

And there was a sense of excitement. And I felt Jesus is excited. And because Jesus was excited, all heaven was excited.

I mean, it only lasted a few seconds. And the reason why Jesus was excited was because He was about to be reconciled with His brothers after nineteen centuries of alienation. See, it's a good thing to empathize with the Lord.

So much of our motivation is carnal. We've got to do it. God said to do it.

And I'm going to do it. Well, praise God, that's good. But there's a much better motivation which is you have His motivation in your heart.

The Jewish people are not easy to love. I hope they'll forgive me for saying that. I remember once when I was still in the British army a Catholic sergeant said to a Jewish woman sergeant in my presence, He said, I love the Jews.

And she said to him, You love them the distance. When you get close they're not always easy to love. But do you know what I love? I love loving them when they're not easy to love.

When they're really awkward and ornery, that's when I enjoy loving them. We have a little meeting with two Jewish couples in Jerusalem. We meet weekly or more or less weekly to pray.

It's one of the best meetings we've ever had in all our ministry. Six of us get together and we pray like one person. And one day we were sitting there and discussing the ultra-Orthodox.

And I mean, they are not easy to love. And we were kind of pulling them to pieces. And the Spirit fell on one of these young Jewish women.

She got a little prophetic message from Jesus. And she said, I know they're funny but I love them. And what a warning that was.

I know they're funny but I love them. So bear that in mind. They may be funny but Jesus loves them.

So going on with this. Verse 26. And all Israel will be saved.

Did you hear that? Now I pointed out before, all Israel is the chosen remnant. It's not all Israel that's now in being. As it is written, the deliverer will come from Zion, he will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

This is my covenant with them when I take away their sins. So God has made a covenant commitment that the Redeemer will come to Israel and take away their sins and the whole nation will be saved. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake.

From the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the Father's. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. I've heard that passage quoted so many times about spiritual gifts and ministry.

It's true but bear in mind that it's said initially about God's gifts and calling to the Jewish people. They are irrevocable. Nothing is ever going to cancel them.

And then Paul goes on. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. So the mercy we receive is to bring mercy to Israel.

And then he says, For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy on all. Isn't that an astonishing statement? God has got us all penned in the prison of disobedience, Jews or Gentiles, no matter whether we're Russians or American or Chinese. We're all disobedient.

God's got us shut up but He's shut us up there in order that He might show mercy. Isn't that just like God? And then we come to this one as a kind of doxology with which I want to close this series of four teachings. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable are His ways.

Don't deceive yourself, you cannot understand all the judgments of God. You don't know all the ways that God works. Just accept that fact and trust Him.

Trust Him, He knows what He's doing even if you don't. For who has known the mind of the Lord who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him? And then we close with this glorious statement. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

To Him be the glory forever. Amen. And in Revelation 21.6 He says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

And when we receive this revelation there's only one thing that's appropriate. Just to worship Him, to give Him the glory that's due to His name. I had mentioned previously that the four oldest girls went ahead of us.

They were evacuated by the British military. Which is a little... I mean, just as God can do anything when He gets the British army working for you. And they arrived in England without... I mean, where were they going? But many British soldiers had come to the home in Ramallah.

And some of them had left their addresses. And one way or another the girls got in contact with these former soldiers. And they were fairly well taken care of.

Some of them ended up with my parents in Somerset. My father had just retired and settled in a rather grandiose mansion in Somerset. And he and the girls got on unusually well, as a matter of fact, which rather surprised me.

And he appreciated the girls and one of them was very interested in gardening, which he was. So there was really a good relationship developed between my parents. I have to say in many ways my non-evangelical parents were really more kind to us in some ways than some of the professing Christians.

We had a very difficult time. We were scattered. We were in different homes.

I still had my income from Cambridge, which was very small. But really we were just cast on the mercy of the Lord and He sustained us. So here we were in London.

Now there were eight girls and Lydia and myself. And we were really refugees. And it's hard to be a refugee anywhere, I'm sure.

But to be a refugee in your own country is very testing. And we went through some real tests. However, many people were kind to us.

Some of the Christians took us in. Some didn't. But really the people who were kindest of all were my own parents, which really surprised me.

It gave me a different view of my own parents. Anyhow, we prayed earnestly. I ended up in Cambridge for a while.

I still had the right to live in King's College. And I think it was Lydia's prayers that prevailed. We ended up in London and looking for an apartment that would be big enough to hold the whole family, which was ten persons, which is not very easy to find, especially in central London.

Well, I said to Lydia, let's look in the phone directory and see if there are any house agents, which was what we called realtors in those days. Well, there were no house agents listed, but there was a house agent whose name was Hulse. So we got a hold of him, phoned him, and he said, well, I have a place which suits you, but it's already rented.

Well, I said, if it falls through, will you please let us know? And we prayed earnestly, and a couple of weeks later he said the other people were not able to take it. So that morning I had in my Bible reading when Jesus said to the disciples just before the Passover, follow such and such a man and he'll take you to a large upper room furnished. And when we got to this apartment, that's exactly what the top floor was built on.

It's the only row of houses that had an extra top floor, and there was a large upper room furnished. So we began to settle down in London, and the girls were really rather intoxicated with London by comparison with Ramallah, it was a different sort of place. And I didn't know, but there's a place called Speaker's Corner which all British people are familiar with.

And in those days it was much more popular than it is today because there was really no television. Very few people had money for cinemas. So you could get large crowds of people, and everybody had a right to proclaim his particular views.

The only thing you were not allowed to do was criticize the royal family. If you did that you would be arrested by the police. I never had any ambition to do that.

So we were walking past that place once and I said to Lydia, one thing I'll never do is preach in this place. Well a little while later we were back in Hyde Park and saw this crowd of men around a girl with long black hair. And they were really pulling her hair and not treating her right at all.

So I went over to see what was happening. And it was our daughter Rahama. And she was preaching to them, I mean to my astonishment.

She had a very small little command of English language. I remember her saying to one set of men, you're all too selfish, when you mean you're all too selfish. But she had such a burden for the people that she really got through to them.

So I stepped into this crowd to tell them what I thought about the mobbing this girl. And I started to preach to them. I ended up preaching three times a week for seven years.

So you know, never say you won't do anything because you'll end up doing it. And really we unintentionally without planning it built a congregation out of those meetings. And there was amongst a

few people a real hunger for God.

Most of the people were callous and indifferent. And disillusioned because we'd won a war and lost so much. And won very little for the war.

So at any rate, we would preach in Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch. And then invite people to number 77 Westbourne Grove. Which became quite a well known place in those circles.

Well that meant getting on a bus and traveling at least a couple of miles. A little bit more. Then you had to get out of the bus and come to this private residence.

Climb five flights of stairs to this large upper room. Which is the only, as I said, the only house in the whole row that had this extra room. And that was where we held our meetings.

And we held meetings there for probably seven years. And during that time many people came to the Lord. Many were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Some received miraculous healings. We never grew to a large number of people. God was always at work.

One of the most remarkable things that I've never seen duplicated anywhere except in Scripture. Was one evening a man came up with crutches. Who was lame and been injured.

And we prayed for him and he was healed. And threw away his crutches. And there was such an outburst of praise and worship.

I say this very carefully and I have witnesses for it. The whole room where we were worshipping was shaken with the power of God. And continued probably for half an hour.

And some of our neighbors in the street said to us the next day, What happened to your building up there? It was shaking. So this was an objective experience. It was not something subjective.

And we saw many wonderful things happen there. But always on a small scale. And eventually I felt the Lord opened the way for me to go to Kenya.

To become the principal of a college for training African teachers in Kenya. Which was where I ended up after leaving London. The invitation to Kenya came because a Canadian Pentecostal mission had a teacher training college.

Which was approved by the educational department of the government of Kenya. But they couldn't find a suitable principal anywhere in Canada who was willing to go to Kenya. So because one of my daughters had already married a man and moved to Kenya.

They heard about me and offered me the job. And I accepted. So at the beginning of 1957, Lydia and I and the two youngest girls flew out to Kenya.

The rest of the girls by that time launched out on their own. Several of them were married. And so we arrived in Kenya.

And God has given me over the years a very special love for the African people. It was quite exciting to arrive in Africa. And for the first time I found people who really wanted to hear the gospel.

You didn't have to argue with them. You didn't have to convince them. They just were hungry.

And so I ended up five years as a principal of this college. And we enlarged the college. We doubled the size.

We took in women students. And I remember I think the first year that we had men and women students graduate. We had 60 students that graduated.

Every one of them had been saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. And even today in Kenya many of them are serving the Lord in significant positions. One memorable thing in Africa was we saw two people raised from the dead.

Two of our students. The one was a man. His name was Noah Mulyera.

And later he became headmaster of a school. Well then one of our girl students became desperately ill. And Lydia and I went to visit her.

And by the time we got there she was dead. And quite definitely dead. So I did exactly what Jesus said.

I put everybody out. And Lydia and I knelt on opposite sides of the bed. And we prayed.

And she suddenly sat up and said, Has anybody got a Bible? So I said, Yes. And she said, Read Psalm 42. So I pulled my Bible out and read Psalm 42.

Well, she was definitely, she was healed but she was probably a little weak. So Lydia and I took her to our home for a few days. Watched over her.

I said to her, Why did you ask me to read Psalm 42? Well she said, and she didn't say when my spirit went out of my body. But that's what she meant. She said, I found myself walking on a very narrow path.

And there were two men in white on either side of me. And I came to a place where there were a lot of bright lights and people singing. And there was a man reading the Bible.

And he was reading from Psalm 42. So I wanted to know what was in Psalm 42. And it's really rather remarkable because each of these students, quite independently of the other, had the same experience when their spirit left their body.

That is, they were escorted by two men in white along a very narrow path. Leading to a place with many bright lights and many people singing. We had many significant experiences in Kenya.

But one of the, I think the most permanent in its consequences, one of our women students, her mother died. So Lydia and I drove out to the funeral. I have never seen poverty so vividly portrayed.

And they dug a hole in front of the African hut. And the hut had been partly damaged by fire so its roof was incomplete. And the mother was buried in a dirty white nightdress in a very inadequate sort of box.

And lowered into the ground. And there were these African women, all Christians, singing choruses in their own language, which was the Rigoti. And these two little girls, very scantily dressed, running around crying.

They were the two youngest daughters in the family. So their elder sister came to us and said, I'm going to have to give up my training because I have to go and look after my sisters. So Lydia and I talked it over and said, We'll take your sister.

You can complete your training. So we did. So we ended up with two little, I suppose one was about three and one was about five.

A little younger. I received a beautiful letter many years later from the elder girl, which I have somewhere. And she said, For the first time in my life, I slept in a real bed.

I had real sheets. And somebody took me in arms and held me. So eventually, the girl graduated and she could take her sisters back.

So we let them go. But Lydia said, I'll make you some cookies before you go. But we had to go to a meeting of the missionaries on the station and very late.

So when we came back, the girls were asleep. I always remember Susanna saying to Lydia the next morning, I think you forgot to make the cookies. So that we thought was, you know, as much as we would do.

But then one day about five o'clock in the afternoon, we were sitting in our house and a rather strangely assorted group of people came up, a black African couple and a white woman. And the white woman was carrying a small black baby wrapped in a very dirty towel. And so we invited them in and they sat down.

They said, This little girl's mother died when she was giving birth. And the baby was found abandoned on the floor of an African hut. And they picked her up and took her to the hospital.

And they've kept her there for six months. Now the hospital tells us we're not a children's home. We can't keep her.

So we've been going around every family in this area, African, European or Asian, and saying, Will you take this little girl? And we went to the hospital and the hospital said they couldn't take her. But they said, Why don't you go to the princes because they take children. So when they arrived, we said, Well, that was too long ago and we couldn't possibly do that now.

We have our educational work and we're very, very busy. So they said, Well, maybe sit down for a little while. We're so tired.

So they sat down and we gave them some water to drink. Then they got up to go. And as the white woman went past me with the baby in her arms, the baby put out her left hand straight towards me as if to say, What are you going to do about it? And I looked at Lydia.

She was on the other side of the room. And normally we would never make such a decision without praying and talking together. And Lydia said, Give me a week to get a crib and some baby clothes and you can bring her back.

So that's how we got our ninth daughter, an African daughter. Well, we inquired about the little baby. If she had a name and they told us, Yes, it's Joska.

So we all started calling her Joska. It was several years before I discovered that really that was the way the Africans pronounced Jessica. So I now call her Jessica and most of the members of the family still call her Joska.

Anyhow, the time came for Lydia and me to leave Kenya on furlough. And the question arose, What's going to happen to Jessica? And I said to the various authorities, I said, If you will get her on my British passport, we'll take her with us. Well, they were completely without anybody else to take Jessica.

So they wangled it and got her on my British passport. And she traveled with us to Europe, to Britain, and then to Canada where we spent a year. I was doing some Bible teaching on what they call deputational work.

Then I felt the time came for us to leave Canada. And I had an invitation from an American Assemblies of God pastor whom I'd known when he was in the forces in the Middle East. And he'd always said, If you're ever in North America, come and visit me.

So I got in touch with him and he invited us. So we set out from Canada by train, which is a beautiful journey through the Rockies, and arrived at Winnipeg, then took the train south to the American border. Well, we must have been a strange looking group.

There was me, there was Lydia, who was a lot older than I was, and there was this little black girl who was about three and a half at the time. And so when we got to the American border, they said, What are you coming for? And I said, I'm coming for a visit. And they said, How long? And I said, About six months.

And they said, That's too long for a visit. So I've had to deal with a lot of different people in similar situations. So I said, I know you never argue with them.

So I simply said, Well, maybe you can help us. And they said, Well, come in to Minneapolis, and we'll help you to immigrate. I had never even thought of immigrating to the United States.

And it was an amazing response. Also, I learned later that I had to immigrate under the Indian quota, because I'd been born in India. So anyhow, I immigrated to the United States with Lydia and Jessica.

And in due course, we became American citizens, all of us. Thank you.

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