

# The Ministry of Restoration - Part 3

by Dick Hussey

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*The sermon emphasizes God's ministry of restoration, highlighting the importance of spiritual satisfaction and unity through Christ and the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Judges 9:13, Judges 9:31, Psalm 104:15, Jeremiah 33:9, Jeremiah 33:11, Acts 2:13, Ephesians 5:18

**Topics:** "Communion With God", "Spiritual Longing"

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## Description

In this sermon on Judges Chapter 9, Jotan, the only surviving son of Gideon, speaks a parable from the top of a hill. One of the pearls in this parable is found in verse 13, where the vine is tempted with promotion but chooses to remain in its place to bring forth wine that glorifies God and man. The sermon then shifts to a discussion on the longing for communion with God and the desperation to be in close relationship with Him. The speaker emphasizes the torment and longing that comes when this communion is lost or interrupted. The sermon concludes with a reference to the bride in Chapter 2, who seeks her beloved but cannot find him, expressing her deep desire to be reunited with him.

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## Transcript

Just a brief recap of this morning before we move on, and that it's the purpose of God in this great restoration which he is proclaiming and promising here, that all his own dear priests will be satiated, they'll be satisfied. Remember what I said about that officer in the army commenting to another colleague of his, you must have your soldiers happy, and that is by feeding them well. Make sure they get their meals, plenty to eat, and in good time, and there's something in the natural that transcends to the spiritual.

If we're satisfied, hallelujah, everything can happen, and anything can happen in God, and if we're unsatisfied or dissatisfied, sooner or later we're heading for trouble. There's something, frustration, inner discontent, that will sooner or later flare up, and it's the will of God. He has to bring us with his skill in different stages, maturing us, bringing us on from one stage to another, but it is his desire that we should be satisfied once, and satisfied with the reality, satisfied primarily with him as our real fountain head.

We moved on to Numbers, and then to Leviticus, and we took the types of the priests, and the portions that they enjoyed, and we saw in that chapter two, all these offerings, where there was variety and taste, the oven, the pan, and the frying pan, always the fine flour, always the blessed anointing of oil, always the fire, always unleavened, and always the salt, that salt that's so full of the richest meanings. And in a way, although we're using parables, and the types, and the figures of the Old Testament, but they all point to God's central focal theme in the whole of his revelation, and that is the son of his love. When somehow in

our revelation, in our moving, we get out of focus, and that blessed Christ of God ceases to be the center, and the focal point, then you can take it that something is getting out of gear, something is out of place.

The blessed Holy Ghost has come to centralize, and to glorify Christ, and to make him absolutely the center of our love, and our highest affection, and devotion. And so, all these things, the offering, and the fire, and the salt, and the fine flour, they all speak in one way or another of that inexhaustible Christ of God. He's absolutely infinite.

There is no end to his fullness, and his grace, and the wonder of all he is. And we ended, too, on that note of those baffles of grace provided to, in all this restoration of the house of God. We saw it in Ezra, how the mighty God had moved that king, and the lavish provision, gold, silver, and wheat, and wine, and oil, and then that lovely verse ending with salt without measure.

And how lovely, don't mind those of you who were here this morning, but let me repeat it, that beauty of the salt that preserves, and is put on a choice cut of meat to make sure those microbes, that bacteria, doesn't get into that beautiful stuff, that food that's being provided, and begin to erode into it, and to rot it, and spoil it, so that it will stink, and just have to be scrapped, and go into the dustbin. And we saw that in the Spirit, that is what these wicked microbes and germs are trying to do, just to get into the hearts of precious ones in the body of Christ. And we've all felt it, and we all know it's not fantasy or imagination, it is a reality we have to face, especially when we're living a close quarter, shoulder to shoulder, day in, day out, and we know it's a reality.

Trying to bring misunderstanding, trying to bring disagreement, and cross-purposes, and complaints, and criticism, and slant remarks, and all that kind of thing, that will just, if you're not careful, eat into your heart, take away your sweetness, and your love, and the whole thing will begin to rot, and to stink. And how that in the old, one answer was bags of salt, and those microbes knew that they couldn't, that salt was a repellent, and it kept them away, and they couldn't get this priceless food stuff. And we saw that beautiful verse as a type of that provision of our King of Kings, salt without measure, from which we move to that scripture in Acts 4, chapter 4, towards the end, where after the Holy Ghost was poured, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with great boldness and power, and then it says, great grace was upon them all.

And there they lived together, thousands of them, with lots of opportunities for treading on each other's thorns, and having a good old squabble, and fight, but there was great grace. There were bagfuls of grace, of heavenly salt, poured upon their spirits, so that they could be of one heart, and of one soul. And my dear one, isn't this what we are to covet with all our hearts? To love one another, and to be in tender grace, sweetly united with a salt that will repel any idea of criticism, and fault-finding, and gossip, and all that stuff that's really diabolical, and that just comes to, well, to try and rot the body of Christ, and destroy the work of God.

Now we're going to move on, and I'd like us to think for a few minutes, always on the line of God feeding his priests of the bread. Here in England, many years ago, it was I think 36 years ago when I first came, I found the surprise that when you have a meal, lunchtime for instance, you serve your main course, and I miss something that in Spain and the Argentine, is always present, and that is your bread. You have your stew, you have your roast beef, or whatever it is, but by your side you have a slice of bread, and here and there you keep on getting nibbles of it, and I kept on looking to my left, but the bread wasn't there, and I had to get accustomed to the way we eat here in England without the bread.

But you know, bread is an essential. If I were to ask for a show of hands, how many of you had at least one slice of bread today? Hands up. Amen.

And yesterday, how many of you had at least one slice of bread? Again. Tomorrow, how many of you expect to have at least one slice of bread? So, the conclusion is very clear, we just can't live without bread, and this of course takes us to the bread of heaven, the bread of God, and I'd like you now to look with me at Leviticus 24 from verse 9, Leviticus 24, sorry from verse 5, I beg your pardon, Leviticus 24 verse 5, And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof. Two-tenths of these shall be in one cake, and thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord.

And thou shalt put fewer frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every Sabbath you shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his son's, and they shall eat it in the holy place, for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute.

This again is a type, it's a figure, but it shows us so beautifully how that bread, which is called by the way the show bread, and this really means in the original, it means the bread of the presence, because it was literally in the presence of God. It was taken out hot from the oven, it was put in two rows of six with frankincense, and it was left there seven days and seven nights in the presence of God. It didn't go stale or dry, it was wholemeal, the right stuff that lasts.

And then the next Sabbath, the priest would come along with another twelve loaves taken right out of the oven, he'd remove those other twelve and he'd replace these fresh ones and take the other twelve, but not to go to the bin or to be given out to the poor, the priest would take them to a clean holy place, he'd call his wife and his sons and daughters, and they sit at a table and eat that precious bread. And it was bread that had been, as we said, a whole week there. Show bread, bread of the presence, it had been there before God in the wonderful presence of God with the light of God shining into it, with the peace of God, with the breathing of God, with the presence of God.

And I tell you, in the Spirit, that bread would taste of God, it would smell of God, and there was a real way in which they were eating the bread of God. I trust something goes through to your spirit, my brother, my sister, about eating this precious, precious bread of heaven. There's that lovely song, Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more.

I loved it when in a prayer I heard earlier on, I'm hungry for you. Oh, it's blessed to be given a heart that has a hunger and a thirst for the living God. And when you know that this precious bread, bread of God, for you to eat, hallelujah, something in you responds deeply, and you go for it, and tremblingly you take it into your mouth, and you swallow it and enjoy it.

Bless his name. But now I'd like you to turn for a minute to Joshua chapter 9, Joshua chapter 9, and we're going to read verse 12. Joshua chapter 9 and verse 12.

This, our bread, we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you. But now, behold, it is dry and it is moldy. A strange verse to read, isn't it? Just to put you into the context, this was the occasion when the Gibeonites, they lived in the promised land, and they knew that the children of Israel had been told by the Lord that they were to slay all the old inhabitants of the land.

And they didn't want to be killed, so they acted in a very wily way, and they put on old clothes, and they got old moldy bread, etc., etc., and they pretended that they didn't belong to that land of Canaan, that they'd come from a very, very long journey, hundreds of miles away, traveled for weeks and weeks, and they'd come to make an alliance with them. Of course, the children of Israel didn't really consult with the Lord. They fell into that trap.

They made that alliance, and a few days later they realized that they'd been told a downright lie. And we had read that verse, and that verse was a real lie. They were saying, we took this bread, and it was beautifully fresh when we started on the journey, miles and miles away.

It wasn't true at all. They had come from just around the corner, a lie in the mouth of those Gibeonites. But I want to tell you something, that in the mouth of many a child of God, this is not a lie, but an absolute, and in some cases a sad truth.

So, I read it again with that in mind. Now, it's not the Gibeonites, but it's a child of God speaking, this, our bread, we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you. But now, behold, it is dry and it is moldy.

What do I mean? I started on my journey a long, long time ago, and oh, I tasted that bread of life. It was Jesus, wonderful, fresh, hot, crunchy, right out of the oven, marvelous. But now I've been a long way on the journey.

I've had disappointments. I've made my big mistakes and blunders. I've put my big foot into it so many times, and my bread has got dry and moldy, and it's no longer what it used to be.

Sometimes we come across this truth, this reality, and if we are to be honest, yes, Lord, that's me. The Gibeonites were telling a lie, but if I said these words, I'd be telling the truth. I started years ago.

It was lovely and wonderful, but now something's gone wrong, and I've dried up, Lord, and it's all moldy inside. But hallelujah, I want to tell you over Jesus that it's wonderful, and just can come to that blessed oven of God with that beautiful fire and bring you again, my dear one, fresh bread of heaven so that you'll tremble with delight and eat it and feast on it and enjoy it again and say, oh Lord, it's getting like it was at the beginning. It's getting even better.

Dear, dear Lord, I found you again in your sweetness and your freshness and your beauty. Bless the Lord. I trust if any of you, my dear one, has just got dry and dried up inside, these days as we're here before the Lord, something will happen inside you.

Oh, hallelujah, and the fresh bread from heaven will again be your happy portion. Bless his name. In every proper meal, I suppose, there should be a drink.

I've recently turned to the habit of not drinking with my meals as a rule. I drink before or long after, but nevertheless, it is the habit, isn't it, that at every meal there should be drink? And I'd like to speak to you very briefly about the wine. Will you turn to Judges 9.13 first? We'll read three verses quite briefly, and then we'll sum it up shortly.

Judges chapter nine, it's a lovely parable by Jotham, the only of the seventy sons of Gideon that survived. And he spoke a parable from the top of a hill. And here in this parable, in this parable, we find two or three pearls.

One of them is this verse 13. In verse 12, you see, the vine has had an invitation. Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us, or as the margin will tell you, come thou and go up and down for other trees.

And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine which heareth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? If you look a bit further back in the story, you find the same thing about the olive tree, and how good it is to know our place. Here, the vine has the subtle temptation of promotion to go and reign over all the other trees. But it says, No, sir, God's given me a place in life.

That place is, praise God, to bring forth the wine which shears God and man. And I'm not going to give that up, to go and run up and down with you trees of the forest. And will you turn to Psalm 145, verse 15, Psalm 104.

Did I say 145? I should have said 104. Verse 15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart.

And this lovely verse, wine that maketh glad the heart of man. Now, will you turn quite briefly to the Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2, verse 14, verse 13. Sorry, Acts 2, 13.

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, and what he says to them is, Look, they're not full of wine, as you say. Verse 17, 16.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And Ephesians chapter 5, well known as it is, but let's look at it for a minute.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is success, but be filled with the Spirit. And here we move from the natural wine to the heavenly wine, to that blessed outpouring of the Holy Ghost that brings the wine of heaven to our hearts.

I'd just like to make a point we were sharing with Dave Medlock a while ago, you hear these days that expression, being drunk. I think sometimes it's even said, drunk with the Spirit, or drunk with joy, and without wanting to be unduly critical. But I disagree with that word, being drunk.

And here, if we look at the word, we find that he's saying on the one hand, be not drunk with wine, wherein is success. In other words, he uses the word drunk, and he says, not that. And then he moves on, but he doesn't say, but be drunk with the Spirit.

He says, be filled with the Spirit. And I see two substantial differences. When you're drunk, number one, you lose consciousness.

And you say a whole lot of things, and the next day you're told about it, and you can't remember because you weren't conscious. And the second thing, it's a bit crude, but it's true. When you finish, when the whole process is over, you are sick, and you vomit, and you live a foul mess.

But when you're filled with the Spirit, it's entirely different. First of all, you're very conscious. All your faculties come into play.

Your mind is alive. Your heart is throbbing and beating for God. And all your personality comes forth, but moved, fired, directed by the Holy Ghost.

And you know what you're doing. Sometimes your words might go beyond your understanding, because the Spirit of God is touching heart in depth that you don't know. But nonetheless, you're quite conscious.

You know what you're doing. You know what you're saying. And the second thing, there's no leaving a foul mess.

There's leaving a trail of holy fire, of love and of grace that will build up others and do them a power of good. And it is blessed, heavenly wine. Hallelujah.

When you drink of God. And here, let me just make yet a further point. It says, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves.

And it goes on in Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Now, in some translations, this King James is beautiful, because there were men of God who had a great, a great respect for God's Word. The Spanish one, for instance, that isn't, hasn't the same ring of divine inspiration as the King James.

The mind has come into it. It doesn't seem right to say, speaking to yourself. So they put, speaking to one another, or speaking among yourselves, as if I'm filled with the Spirit and I speak to Alma, and Alma speaks to you.

That may happen, certainly, but what the Word is saying is, speaking to yourselves. In other words, when I'm filled with the Spirit, I'm speaking to myself. Alma is speaking to himself, and Sylvia to herself, and you to yourself.

Now, what does that mean? You've got to live it and experience it to understand. Yes, you're praising the name of the Lord, you're worshiping, you're praying, you're ministering the Word, you're sharing, you're prophesying, but as you do it, you hear yourself, you listen. And by that fullness of the Spirit, there's a ring of life, and a ring of truth, and a ring of blessedness.

And as you say in the Spirit, Ah, the Father, I love you, you hear yourself, and you're speaking to your death. You're speaking to yourself, and I'm speaking to myself, and telling ourselves what a wonderful Father He is. Oh, how our whole soul is going out for Him, and how blessedly united we are for Him.

And when you speak in the Holy Ghost, yes, you speak to others, but you speak to yourself, and you build up yourself, and you do yourself a power of good by that blessed, indwelling Spirit. Well, praise the Lord for that. Hallelujah.

So, for drink, heavenly wine, the Spirit outpoured in our hearts. So, we come back to Jeremiah 31, see what errors we've got. Yes, and I have here a few verses I'd like to share with you.

Let's start with Psalm 81, verse 16. Psalm 81, verse 16, is bringing it to a climax. What he started saying, Asaph, the author of this psalm, on verse 13, Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways.

And verse 16, He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock should have I satisfied them. Deuteronomy 32, verse 13. Deuteronomy 32, verse 13, He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey

out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.

In this same chapter, chapter 32, verse 4, He is the rock. And if you'll bear with me, I'd like us to have a look at two more verses before we continue, and one of them is Isaiah 26, verse 4. Isaiah 26, verse 4, Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. And here you will note that the margin tells us that the exact Hebrew for these words, everlasting strength, is the rock of ages.

The other verse we want is in Solomon's song, Song of Solomon. As you know, it comes before Isaiah, and we want chapter 2, verse 14, Oh my dove, Solomon's song 214, Oh my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, and the secret places of the stairs. Just that expression, cleft of the rock.

Some of you will know that that wonderful hymn, rock of ages, cleft for me, is taken from these two verses, and that it's an absolutely scriptural name for our Lord Jesus. He is on the one hand the rock of ages. Paul also tells us in 1 Corinthians that the rock, the spiritual rock that followed the children of Israel was Christ, the Christ of God.

And here we find this hidden pearl, this unusual statement of God about his obedient, committed, loving people in the Psalm 81, to give them honey out of the rock. I know we can take it, as I was saying this morning, just in the natural, and it sounds almost a bit of flowery language, sentimental, superficial, and that's quite true. But in the Spirit, bless God, when by the Holy Ghost you come into it, you find that there is a reality where there is no fantasy, no human, carnal sentiment, but it's pure Spirit right out of the depths of the loving Christ of God.

Years ago, when I was in Argentina, I had two or three hives, bee hives. I never knew a great deal about beekeeping, but I liked the idea, so I played about with them, and one of the things I remember, among many others, now and again I opened the hive, just lift it up, and as I lived in an area where there were lots and lots and lots of eucalyptus trees, the moment the lid came off, a beautiful fragrance of eucalyptus in that honey. And so there is eucalyptus honey, a clover honey, and a great variety of honey, and I must say I'm very fond of honey.

For breakfast I have a couple of slices of toast. The first one I generally half, and if there's any peanut butter, half a slice. If there's marmalade, okay, to conform, I'll have half a slice of marmalade, but then if there's a pot of honey going there, instinctively my right hand will reach out, and I just spread it thick with honey, and I really swallow it and enjoy it.

I love honey. Obviously you mustn't overeat honey. It's not good, but this takes us far beyond.

This is not the earthly honey, sweet and beautiful as it is. This is the honey of the rock, that great, wonderful, unspeakable rock of ages, that loving, blessed Christ opening up his heart to you and to me, and just pour in that heavenly honey, and oh, your spirit just sucks it and blows it in, and oh, hallelujah. It's blessed, blessed heaven.

I don't want to sound like a mystic or like an airy fairy one, but you know when you speak about these things, either you're living it, and you know what you're talking about, or else you change the subject and speak about what you know. And I trust in grace and meekness, but I want to tell you that the last few days I've been eating rock of the honey. Not easy to explain, but you know, you really get close to the Lord.

With me it happens this way. I tremble inside, not that I'm going berserk in any way, I'm being shaken sweetly by the Spirit inside, and there's a communication of grace and of love and of sweetness, and of Christ himself, this blessed honey out of the rock. And oh, I thank God I've been having my fill of this these last days.

I bless God that the other day I suddenly caught sight of that verse, Psalm 81, honey of the rock, and then I went to Deuteronomy, honey out of the rock, and I said yes Lord, oh hallelujah Lord, how you feed and how you satisfy those who really hunger and thirst for you. Oh bless the Lord, let this just spark in my dear one a hunger, a longing for that living Christ. Paul I'm sure knew a lot about it.

He had to pay such a price. He didn't use ever this expression as far as we know, but he'd lost the comforts of a home and many other things. He paid a tremendous price.

He kept on emptying himself, losing it all, throwing it all away, that he might gain Christ. And then writing in that great prayer, he says that ye, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend fully, that's the sense, fully, to lay hold on, to understand, to know, to experience what is, and then he goes to count, what is the breadth, and what is the length, and what is the depth, and what is the height, and to know the love of Christ, that part is all knowledge. When I read those verses, I know that here is a man who knows what he's writing and talking about.

I feel it's way beyond me, but here is a man that's got a dimension and a knowledge and an experience of the love of Christ that has filled him and flooded him like a mighty ocean, and for that love he is ready to lose all else and let it all go by the board, as long as he can be immersed and baptized and filled and flooded in that ocean of the love of Christ. Oh, blessed God, you know I believe that it's much more for us, brother and sister. He prays there, and he goes on praying after he said those lovely words, you know, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, and then he comes to those final words before ending up the prayer, that he might be filled with all the fullness of God, with all the fullness of God.

Well, I haven't arrived there, I'm probably miles and miles away yet, but I want to get there, you know. I believe if Paul dared, my sister, my brother, to pray this for the Ephesians, we can take it. He's prayed it for us too, and I don't believe that Paul prayed in unbelief just to write lovely lofty things that were never to be fulfilled.

I believe he prayed in faith, and he said, Lord, those blessed Ephesian saints, they're your blood-bought ones. Lord, I labor for you, and I love them, and I want your highest and your best. Oh, Lord, swamp them to love and your grace, that they'll be filled with all the fullness of God.

I can't understand it. Honestly, my mind can't take it in that tiny little insignificant beings like you and me can be filled with all the fullness of God. But something in that prayer and the word comes through, and it challenges me, it fires me, it goals me, it tells me, Dick, there's much, much more for you.

Move on, lay hold on God, go for your Christ, that there is much, much more to ravish your soul and to fill you and bless you beyond measure. Can we come back yet again to Jeremiah 31? No, I'm sorry, now we leave 31 for a moment. If you like, we can take that honey as our dessert and consider our meal has finished at that.

But I'd like you to read with me in chapter 33, 33, two verses, verse 9, and it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.

And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. And verse 11, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his mercy endureth forever, and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of God, for I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as hath the first said the Lord." What amazing grace is contained in all this.

These people that at this stage were like perfect beggars, defeated, a shame and a reproach to the Lord, and he can say such things. He can say that they shall hear of all the good that I do to them, and I'm very much struck by these words, verse 9 again, halfway down the verse, and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. In other words, the goodness and the blessing and the sweetness and the kindness and the joy and the bliss and the wonder of it all, really, really, really sweeping them off their feet to the point that they fear and they're trembling at the very, very sight of what's happening.

God filling them and filling them and flooding them. Again, I'll just tell you how I find it works with me, and I can't expect God to do in others the same things as he does in me. He works differently.

You may respond a different way, but when the Holy Ghost is upon me, when God moves upon me, I shake, I tremble, and I know I'm not going berserk. I know that I'm not going emotional. I can't manufacture it, but I know that when I really get close to the Lord and love him, and I know that the whole of my manhood is just poised for God, and the Spirit moves upon it, and there is something that makes me sweetly tremble.

It's the hand of God touching my depth, and oh, there I just feel the goodness and the grace and the love melting me to tears often inside when I quake and I shake and I tremble, and it's the beauty and the love and the wonder. When I remember the mess my life was in years ago, the foul things that the enemy did to me came out through my life and mouth, and that God has swelled and washed all that out, dribbled it away, and in amazing grace has chosen to flood me and bless me and hug me and love me and cuddle me, oh, and tell me how much he loves me, and when he does that by the Holy Ghost, I tremble before God with holy delight, oh God, I tremble with delight and thanks, and I bless your name for all the good, all the wonder, all the heaven that you pour into my life. What a promise and what a glory when it begins to be outworked, and you're really living in the good of it, hallelujah, oh, glory to God, glory to God, and we go down to verse 11, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

You see, it was a horrible situation when all this was given. As I said last night, everything had gone to pot. Jerusalem was just a desolation and a ruin, and there was no more singing, no more joy, just crying, sorrow, pain, sickness, bloodshed, death on all sides, misery and woe at all levels, and God says, I'm going to change all that, and once again in this place that's such an utter ruin, we're going to hear the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

Bless God. Now turn with me, leaving your ribbon or whatever on this page in case we come back, and it's Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 34, I think it's 34, or have I got, yes, Jeremiah 7 verse 34, Then will I cause to seize from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, for the land shall be desolate. And these words that God will cause to seize, the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, they're repeated at least on two other occasions, and here we have something of the ways of God

as human beings, especially when blessing first comes our way, and it comes as a free gift, nothing to earn, nothing to struggle, it's given to us.

We don't fully value it. We enjoy it, we see it's wonderful, but we don't treasure it and guard it as we should. And so in his wisdom, very, very often to get us right down to rock bottom, God has to take away, to withdraw that blessing, and then something will begin to happen, something perhaps on the lines of that being allured into the wilderness where we really miss, and oh, that voice that I heard, that welling up of love that I knew, that grace, that grace that surrounded me, where is it gone? And the cry, the cry that will make us go for it.

Let's have a look at Solomon's song again, and we get two or three glimpses of this. Solomon's song, chapter three, you see the bride in chapter two and chapter one, there's been a beginning of communion, of love, of walking together, of hearing the bridegroom's voice, hearing the voice of the bride, but now in verse three, by night on my bed I sought him whom I so loveth. I sought him, but I found him not.

I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom I so loveth. I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me, to whom I said, So ye him whom I so loveth.

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom I so loveth. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house. In other words, here we get a glimpse, a first glimpse of this, an introduction, the love, the beauty, the sweet communion, the voice of the bridegroom, and suddenly the shock is gone.

It's gone. What's happened? And there the bride misses it, and she begins to go and look and inquire, and she doesn't stop until she finds him again. And then once she's found him, she says, Oh, I found him, I got hold of him, and I will not let him go.

Oh, oh, oh, Lord, Lord, Lord, this heavenly portion, I mustn't miss it. I mustn't lose it. It must never happen again.

And yet, the folly of human nature. And we read on, and the same thing happens again. Chapter 5, the dealing goes deeper this time.

Verse 2, I sleep, Solomon's song 5, verse 2, I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of night. You see, he's in the reality of love that's sacrificial, that goes out to the darkness and to the night in the discipline of the Spirit.

And the bride, well, you know, she's holy. She's a virgin now, and she's got the gifts of the Spirit. And she's got him to bed, neatly tucked in, her feet ever so clean, and the voice of the bridegroom is calling her.

But you see, she's been falsely lured into her attainments. How holy I am. Oh, now that doesn't happen to me anymore.

Oh, I'm a sanctified believer. Oh, I'm filled with the sweetness of Christ, and these gifts that God's given me, when I lift up my hands and praise, it is as though I can see the incense rising from me. And you see a beautiful thing given by God, we begin to deify it, and it lures us away from the blessed Christ of God.

And so, we go on reading, verse 3, and then, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? The beloved knows how to deal with us. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved in me before him. I rose to open to my beloved.

You see, she's heard his voice, and now there's that dear touch of that nail-pierced hand, putting his fingers through the lock. And there she's moved, and she can't stay in bed any longer. She gets up, but even there, the whole focus is all on self.

Look, I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock. How holy, and gracious, and sweet, and anointed, and blessed I am! The perfume that comes from my life, and even there, blessings that are to take us to God, to love God, and living God, can become deified, and they can become golden castes, that is strangers from the living God. And so, with all wisdom, he won't have it, and he withdraws, and leaves the bride behind alone, without hearing his voice.

And so, we go on, verse six, I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, he's gone. My soul says what he spake, I sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave no answer.

You understand what I'm talking about, my dear brother, my sister? Have you ever been engaged in this? I use it in the right way, love venture with the blessed Son of God, so that, oh, it's heaven to you to be in sweet, close communion with him. And if that's lost, or interrupted, it's torment, and you'll cry your eyes out, and you'll pour your heart unto him, and you won't rest until you get him again, because you can't, you can't, you can't live without it. Bless the name of the Lord.

Verse nine, sorry, no, I beg your pardon, verse seven, the watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me. The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I am sick of love.

Oh, tell him I want him again. Tell him I can't live without him. Tell him I'm longing to hear that voice again.

And now here, verse nine, what is thy beloved more than another beloved? O thou fairest among women, what is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us? In other words, what are you fussing and crying about? Can't you take a golf instead? Or they say that amateur flying is wonderful. Forget about this business of getting desperate for God and take a flying, take lessons every Saturday and you'll get a real kick out of it. Or if you don't like that, parachuting is wonderful.

Just go and what is your Lord more than other things? Do you understand what I'm saying? What would you answer? Can't you see he's the blood of my soul? He's the life of my life. Can't you see that I can't live without him? Don't talk to me about golf or flying or parachuting or wine or women or song. I want and I need and I love my Christ and my bridegroom and I want his voice and nothing, nothing else will fill this hungry heart of mine.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. And then she answers the question, verse 10, my beloved is white and grubby, the cheapest among ten thousand. She goes on and in verse 16 she says his mouth is most sweet.

Yell, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend. Oh daughters of Jerusalem, you see this wise, searching, tremendous dealing of God.

Before it was all my graces, my hands distilling mirth, my feet so clean, I'm so comfortable. But now she's been knocked, she's been heartbroken, she's been left without him and she forgets about all that. And when she's asked the big question, what's your beloved more than others? She opens up her mouth, forgets about herself and begins to tell them what he's like and what he means to her.

Hallelujah. Taken right out of the vicious circle of self, me, my person, my need, my gifts, my ministry, right into the depth of the love and the grace and the beauty of the Christ of God. And look at the change it makes on the others.

Verse 6, chapter 6, sorry, verse 1, Whither is thy beloved? Gone over the affairs among women. Whither is thy beloved turned aside that we may cease to be? Hallelujah. In her torment, in her heartbreak, she's just told them from the depth of her being who her Jesus is.

And it's all right, come along, let go with you, we want him, we want him too. Hallelujah. Oh, glory to God for a company of saints that come out of themselves and their gifts and so on are really taken up with Christ and madly in love with him to tell others what he is.

So that others will value him and really go after him too with all their hearts. Bless his name. Well, I've nearly finished so we just come back to Jeremiah 33 and God is telling us there, verse 11, that he's going to return the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

Yeah, very often in moving on in the stages of God there are ways in which we've got to let the past blessing go. In a way we've got to do a swap, lose it, it's got to go to the cross or in some way or other so that we'll go for God in greater depth. Last night a passage was read about the resurrection.

It is sown in weakness, it is risen, it is raised up in power, it is sown in corruption, it is raised up in incorruption, it is sown in dishonor, it is raised up in honor. And in the stages of God's dealings with our souls, and I'm speaking now well beyond new birth, I'm not coming with a message of new birth because, bless the Lord, this has been abundantly ministered here over the years. I'd be trying to bring coal to Newcastle if I did, but oh, in the stages of God, praise his name, there is more than new birth, but it's going on from glory to glory.

And one of the things, not only in an individual life, but also in the life of a church, is that you have an initial stage of grace, of great joy, blessing, and the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, but then a death comes, a dryness sets in, and obviously it's got to be held in God so it should not be satanic and really rip up the church and destroy things. But in the process of God, it is that first thing, that lovely blessing, somehow, yes, but Lord, it's got to go down, it's got to die, and in that death there is a burial, and there is a time when there are those staunch, loyal, faithful ones who press on. It's not the glamour, the joy, the blessing, with crowds and crowds coming.

There's a note almost of sadness and silence, and the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride is no longer heard, but God is dealing with his precious bride. God is bringing her right down to rock bottom, because he wants to bring forth something pure, stronger, deeper, richer, and more fruitful. And so, in his great mercy, he withdraws, and there seems to be like a tomb, like a desolation, like a burial, like a cemetery.

Lord, where is that voice of the bridegroom that we heard one day, those days when our beautiful bridegroom made his voice heard in our midst, and it was heaven to us, Lord, and we as the bride echoed

back, and our voice was heard. Lord, we were madly in love with you, Lord, and where's all that gone? Those that have really set their hearts on God, by the grace of that spirit within, will not, having set their hands to the plow, turn back. For they know that, be it golf, or whatever it may be, it's all death, it's all of no account.

They must, they must have again that voice of the bridegroom, and here's a promise of God, hallelujah. Oh, you've missed it, and for some months, perhaps even for years sometime, Lord, that voice, oh, that voice of the bridegroom, and when it comes back again, oh, hallelujah, the unspeakable thrill, it really, really shakes you. Oh, I'm hearing again that blissful voice that is more wonderful than ever, and the voice of the bride answers back, and hallelujah, the second, the glory of the latter temple is greater than that of the former, because God has been working in it all, and he's determined to bring far greater glories to take us to deeper depths and greater heights in him.

I just want to end on this note, my dear one, are you these days hearing the voice of the bridegroom? Is he your precious bridegroom? Hearing the voice, hallelujah, a voice of love, a voice of tender gratitude, a voice of a heart that's utterly thrilled with him, bless the Lord, this is the promise of God, and if that were not enough, a bridegroom not only comes to make you hear once again that incomparable heavenly voice of his, but to give you honey out of the rock, for you to lap it up and let that sweetness, that sweetness flood your soul and satisfy you to your full, satisfy you fully. I will satiate my priests, I'll fill them with every good thing. Are we just talking in allegory, those nice things that we like to say? The carnal mind would see it this way, anyone coming out of the spirit of a meeting and just listening, what's this collection of airy-fairy stuff, someone cloud nine, completely divorced from the reality of everyday life, that's a carnal mind, that when you're in the spirit unto God, you know that this is rock-bottom reality, that Christ of God, that has kindled a flame of heavenly love in your heart, becomes the object of your greatest, your most passionate love, and you'll either love him and find him in your fullness, or you'll be the most miserable of men and women.

It's either all that God has, that Christ of God filling my heart and life, or I'm a poor wretch that's got nothing left in life, and it's not worth living one moment more if I'm not to have him. Bless his wonderful name. I trust the Lord has in some way brought this word home to you at different levels.

I know that God speaks to us in different ways according to our stage, our condition, our different degree of maturity, but I believe that in his grace God has been speaking, I dare say to a few or even many of us, as I've been sharing these truths, God's been ministering to me too from then. I'd like us in quietness to respond to God's word. If you're challenged, if something inside you says Lord, I want more of you, I'm wanting that honey of the rock, Lord.

Lord, I'm wanting to hear the voice of the Brigham. Lord, I'm wanting that bread of heaven. Lord, I'm wanting that new wine, be what it may.

I'm challenging you just to come boldly and kneel before us, and in the grace of Christ we pray, and God will in some way add to you, bless you, touch you, move on you. Bless his name. Hallelujah.

So just be bold and you may start coming and moving unto God right now. Bless the name of the Lord. Oh Father, with no curiosity now watching who and who not, but oh brother and sister that we should be unto God.

Amen. Oh that light of God will well up. Hallelujah.

I'm just going to pray, and you know at the level to which the Lord has spoken to you, you know what you've come for. It could well be that God will touch you in another direction, but at least as far as you know, Lord, here I am. I haven't stayed like a cold statue in my seat because I know you touch me, Lord, and I want to respond, and I'm saying yes to you, Lord, and I want you, Lord, in a decent measure, Lord, and I've known hitherto.

Oh hallelujah. Amen. Amen.

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