

Ephesians 1 - Paul's Prayer

by Gareth Evans

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1 is a model for our own prayers, where we ask God to give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and to help us know His hope, riches, and power.

Duration: 48:14

Scripture: Matthew 22:39, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Ephesians 1:15, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 10:24, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about receiving a loan from the government and how it was a miracle. He emphasizes that this experience has deepened his understanding of God and his provision. The speaker also highlights the importance of having faith in Jesus Christ as a precondition to knowing God. He then shares a powerful moment in Mexico where he witnessed the brokenness of poverty and realized that God was calling him to bless Him by helping those in need.

Transcript

Today is the start of our Sunday school year, and what we want to do this morning is just take a very, very few minutes, we're going to do this very quickly. There's a lot of people in our church that are involved in ministry. I mentioned Peter with the alarms because the deacons gave me a set of keys to come into the office.

So Anne and I came into the office on Friday, and immediately the alarms went off. And we stood out in the fire wondering, what do we do now, do we call the police, what happens? And fortunately Peter was on the premises, so he came in and pressed a few buttons. So good, thank you brother, you saved me a lot of embarrassment.

I'm going to invite you to reach your hands out to them as we join in prayer, as your act of prayer for this group of leaders with me. If you just lift your hands out toward them, asking the Lord to bless them, and use them for his glory. Father, I thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Thank you for the privilege of knowing you. Thank you for these people who stand before us today, and others unnamed so far, who are serving you in this local congregation. Father, I pray that they might find the yoke easy and the burden light as they work with you in the ministry that you've called them to.

We thank you Lord that when we are yoked with you, the burden truly is light because you are the one who carries the burden. And so we ask for your anointing upon each one standing before us. That as they begin this new year serving you in this place, that they might know your leading, your blessing, your anointing upon them.

That they, with us Lord, might be a people drawn closer to you because of their service. So we lift them to you for your touch upon them, for your blessing, for your keeping. We ask it in Jesus' name.

And all God's people said, Amen. Thank you. The Lord bless you.

These next four months with you. I know that last Sunday a number of you were away on vacation, and you're now back home. And it's so good to have you back with us, and I hope to get to know a lot of you.

I've not got a very good memory for names. I was a school teacher for 18 years, teaching physics, and I think the Lord gives us a certain number of brain cells for remembering names. And I used all mine up in the first year of teaching.

So if I keep saying to you week after week, I say, What's your name? Please forgive me. You'll get to know my name quickly. It's very easy.

You'll see me up here each week, but hopefully I'll get to know your name. Not that only. I hope I get to know you too.

In four months I can get to know a lot of people. And so I trust you'll give me the opportunity to get to know you better. At the beginning of my time with you, I think it appropriate to pray.

And so what I'm going to do this morning, I'd like you to tell me in the book of Ephesians, to look at the prayers that Paul used in that book as he wrote this letter to the Ephesus church. He has one long prayer. It's found in two chapters, in chapter one and chapter three.

And the reason it is in those two chapters, those one prayers, is because he gets so carried away with his thoughts in the first part of the prayer, that he goes off on a tangent and starts expanding on his thoughts. And then he comes back to his prayer again in chapter three. So I'm going to start today by reading the prayer with you.

Ephesians chapter one, we start at verse fifteen. For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, I do not cease giving thanks for you while making mention of you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

I pray that the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe. For these are in accordance with the working strength of his might, which he brought about in Christ. And then he goes on, because he's so excited about what God has done in Christ, he expands on that, but his prayer continues in chapter three.

For this reason, verse fourteen, chapter three, for this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives his name, and I pray that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner man, so

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, the length, the height, the depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. That's my prayer for you. Is that your prayer this morning? That you may come to know him, and that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Do you believe that's possible? It's pointless praying something if you don't believe it's possible. Do you believe it's possible for you to come to know him, and to be filled with his fullness? That's Paul's prayer. And it certainly is my goal for these next four months, that we might be a people who come to know him more, to be filled with his fullness more, that we might leave here, we might come into the year 2017 saying we know him more than we did in 2006.

We've experienced his fullness more. That's my goal. I'm very struck with another book in the Bible, the first letter of John.

I've had the privilege of meeting your first John here. We all know Antoine would introduce himself as First John. Well, there's a book in the Bible called First John.

I wondered whether he was the author, but he assures me he's not. First John, in that letter Paul, and John writes words like this in chapter 2, I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write to you, little children, because you've come to know the Father.

John defines for us what a little child is, a little child of faith. When I was 17, I remember one night kneeling by my bed at home. I was not brought up in a Christian home.

But I'd gone to church that night for the first time in many years. The young man there had challenged me with a question that I'd been trying to avoid for a few weeks. The question was this, tell me, Gareth, he said, what will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ? Five weeks before, I'd been asked the same question by another lady.

And for five weeks, I'd run away from the question. But that night, after that young man spoke that word to me, I went home to my empty house. My mother had died many years before.

My father was out, and my house was empty. And I knelt by my bed, and I prayed for the first time in many years. I was 17 years of age.

And I said, Jesus, if you're real, if you're alive now, if you can hear me, please come into my life. Like these other friends of mine, these young people say you've come into their life, I want you to come into my life. I want you to take away my sin.

Forgive me. And I said a little chorus, it went something like this, into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay.

Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Nothing specific happened, as I felt. I didn't feel anything, but I got up from my knees.

And I knew two things. I did not know my Bible. I didn't know it at all.

But my sins were forgiven, that I could call him Father. That's how John defines a little child in the faith. I write to you, little children, because your sins have forgiven you.

I write to you because you know the Father. The tragedy is that many, many Christians have been Christians many years. They can say those words, but they know nothing more of the Father.

That's a little child. We all are called to be little children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Without becoming like a little child, you can't even see the Kingdom of Heaven, said Jesus.

There's a place for every one of us where we need to come to that place of saying, yes, Lord, I know my sins are forgiven, and I can call him Father. But then John goes on, and he goes to the other end of the spectrum, and he defines what is maturity in Christian faith. He said, now I write to you who are spiritually fathers.

He's not writing gender. He's not writing male gender. He's writing men and women.

Nor is he writing chronological age. I know many young men and women in their 20s who are spiritually mothers and fathers. And I know many Christians, sadly, who are in their 60s and 70s who are spiritually little children, have never grown up, still bear offences, still carry wounds, still struggle.

Spiritual maturity is coming to know Him. John said, I write to you fathers because you know Him who was from the beginning. Spiritual maturity is not how big a church you pastor.

Spiritual maturity isn't how many books of the Bible you can quote. It isn't even how many people you personally have led to Christ. Spiritual maturity is coming to know Him.

In between the two, John says there are young men. He said, I write to you young men. Again, not genealogical, nor gender.

I write to you young men because you're strong, because the Word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the evil one. There is no way to spiritual maturity without passing through the stage of being young men and women who are strong because the Word of God abides in them. And they've overcome the evil one.

Spiritual maturity is knowing God. Next Sunday I'm going to speak on that portion in John. I just want to mention it today because the goal is the same as that of Paul's prayer, to come to know Him, God, in all the revelation of the fullness of Himself that He wants to make known to us.

In my lifetime, I started off as a young child at, say, 17. Kneeling by my bed that night. Three days later, was the day when God first assured me that I went into school three days later that I really was His.

I knew Him. I went on from there to university, and I will maybe over these four months tell you some of the stories of God's leading, miraculous leading in my life. And I began to know not only was He my Savior, He was also my guide.

He was the one who went before me. He was the one who planned where I would be. I do not believe in a blueprint, but I do believe in God's intimate involvement in my life, wanting to lead me as I'm willing to yield to Him.

I began to know Him as my leader, my shepherd. Anne and I were engaged to be married, and Anne had a large goiter, and she decided she wanted it removed before we would get married. Went to see a specialist in London, and then she had to go up to London to have surgery.

And we saw miraculous things that God did, even through the surgery and through the healing. We were told that she would lose control over her weight, or that the goiter would return. Well, that's 45 years ago, and God has done a miracle of healing.

I now know Him as my healer. Jehovah Rapha, that is a biblical term. I'm the Lord that healeth thee.

There have been times in my life when I have needed guidance. There have been times in my life when I've needed healing. There have been times in my life when I've been in financial need.

I remember that 1975 we came to Canada. I was teaching in a school in Toronto, and they paid me \$11,000 a year, which I thought was very, very good until I realized that the average teacher's salary at the time in the British government would not allow you to leave the country with more than 5,000 pounds. That was our total income.

That's all we had. And we struggled during that first two years in Canada very, very much with three little girls. And many times in those two years, how God provided for us financially through brothers and sisters, and even once through the government.

One day I got a note, a telephone call in my school. Mr. Evans, would you please come down to the offices of the Immigration Bureau because the post office workers were on strike. So they had to telephone me.

I went down to the office that afternoon full of fear thinking there was something wrong with my immigration papers. Maybe they were going to send me back to Britain. I didn't know what was happening.

I went in the office and a young lady gave me an envelope. And she said, well, thank you, Mr. Evans, this is for you. We couldn't mail it because the posts are on strike.

And I went home and inside was a check for \$1,500. I think it was \$1,000. The next month it was another \$500.

And for all first-time householders, it came right in the middle of the month and we were desperately in need of finances. Well, you may remember, some of you, that at that time there was one politician whose wife had claimed some of this money for a house that she had bought. And they realized it wasn't for second family houses, for those buying their first property.

A man came to my door one day, introduced himself from the government, and he said, Mr. Evans, he said, did you get the grant? I said, yes, I did. He said, is this the first house you've owned? I said, no. I said, I owned houses in Britain before I came to Canada.

Well, he said, I'm sorry, you're not eligible to this money. I didn't even apply for it. They sent it to me.

Apparently the principal of my school had applied on my behalf. I didn't apply for it, but they'd given me this money. So he said, you'll have to pay it back.

So I said, well, I haven't got it. He said, well, how much can you afford? I said, \$50 a month. He said, fine, for 30 months we'll take \$50 a month.

You work that out, 30 months is nearly three years. 30 times 50 is \$1,500. That's the money they gave me.

I had an interest-free loan from the government for three years. That's a miracle. Except that that is the way, it's an illustration of God providing.

And over the years, I've come to know God in a more wonderful way. He's becoming more and more known to me. I'll tell you more of the story later.

But as I look at this, a couple of things strike me. Is there certain characteristics of the people here? Is there a precondition here? I read in the scripture, for God making himself known. And I believe there is.

Because when I look back, I find here in verse 15, for this reason, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love for one another, your love for the saints. For this reason, because I've heard of your faith, and I've heard of your love, therefore I'm going to pray that God will reveal himself to you. There is a precondition.

If you want to know God, I believe that one of the preconditions, or two of the preconditions, is your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your love for one another. I find it very striking also, that the first thing he prays for, he says, I pray that the eyes of your understanding will be opened so that you will know the hope of his calling. Now, here we have those three words, faith, hope, and love.

Now you've heard of these three being found together in that wonderful chapter where Paul writes to the Corinthians, now abide these three, faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. But you will find, if you look at the letters of Paul, you'll find he links those three together at least seven times.

I've found at least seven occasions where those three are linked together, and here we have them. In 1 Thessalonians, I've heard of your work of faith, and your labor of love, and your patience of hope. He links them together there.

Seven times I find them linked together. Because to Paul, faith, hope, and love are three precious jewels that every Christian should possess. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

And certainly one of these coming Sundays, I want to teach you concerning the faith that pleases God. Shana, concerning your love, I've heard of your love for one another. And I pray that you might know hope.

Now we as Christians very often don't speak much about hope. When was the last time you heard a sermon on hope? Have you ever heard a sermon on hope? In fact, Christians don't talk much about hope because hope is one of those weak little words, well, I hope it doesn't rain this afternoon. I want to teach you what Christian hope is.

There in the future, but today, love. I've heard of your love for one another. Last Sunday, I spoke to you concerning the priorities that the Lord established that last night before he died.

The priorities that he called us to respond to in the covenant meal of the communion table. One of those priorities was this, I command you to love one another. I didn't choose the songs at the worship table that the team had today, but I was very struck by the songs that were chosen.

But a call to love one another, a call to work together as the body of Christ. That is a commandment from the king. You have no options.

I have no option to say whom I will love and whom I will not love. I'm commanded by my king to love you. In these next four months, I might not like some of you, but I'm commanded to love you, and vice versa.

I can't imagine he would love me, but it's possible, I guess. I'm commanded to love you. I have no option.

I'm not commanded to love only those from Departure Bay Baptist Church. I'm commanded to love the people who worship at the Pentecostal Church down the road, or the Brethren Church up the road. I'm commanded to love the people of God.

And I have no option. He doesn't say if you like their doctrine, or you like their style of worship, or you agree with their theology. I command you, says the king, to love one another.

In our Bible class this morning, the adult class, we talked, we began the book of Hebrews. By the way, let me encourage all of you who are free to come to that Sunday morning before you come here to the service. Just began the book of Hebrews.

And it speaks there in the first chapter about Jesus being the complete radiance of the glory of God. And I asked the question of the adult Sunday school class, wouldn't you like the glory of God to come down upon Nanaimo? Nanaimo is such a great church. Not just that we come here and enjoy one another and we see Jesus in one another, but we come here and experience the presence of God, the glory of God.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? Wouldn't it be wonderful? I mentioned that I come from the country of Wales, and my wife was from the little village in Wales where God's glory became manifest in 1902 in the Great Revival, 1904 in the Great Revival. That impacted the world. I was home a few years ago with a Canadian friend.

We were going over there to a wedding of a daughter, and so I took her down to Wales. In our visits to Wales, I took her to my sister-in-law's home. Betty and Viv.

Viv came to the Lord. His father was the son of a man who came to the Lord in the Welsh Revival 100 years ago. I asked Vivian to tell Karen, my friend, some of the stories of the Welsh Revival.

As he was doing so, I could see the passion growing. He's a typical Welshman, I guess, for what God did in Wales in 1904, 100 years ago. Then I said to him, tell me, Viv, what was the major characteristic of the Welsh Revival? Was it the hymn singing? Was it the preaching? Was it the miracles of healing? What was the major characteristic? He and Betty together responded and said, oh, Gareth, it was the awesome presence of both sinners and saints declared God is here.

Wouldn't you like God to be present in the limelight? Wouldn't that be wonderful? Well, we lost ourselves in the presence of Jesus. Well, I'm very struck by the fact that when Jesus concluded his time with his 12 disciples, when he instituted the communion table, he then went aside and he prayed. This is truly the Lord's prayer.

The one we often say, our Father, is truly the disciple's prayer. This is the Lord's prayer. Father, I thank you for these men you have given to me.

I thank you, Lord, that I've not lost any of them except the son of perdition who was chosen before. I thank you, Father, I'm coming back to you to the glory that was once mine. But, Father, though I'm coming back to you, I am praying for these men that I'm leaving here.

I pray, Father, that you will keep them. I'm so glad he keeps me. I'm so glad in this journey that I'm not keeping myself, he is keeping me.

I pray, Father, that you will keep them. I pray, Lord, that they might one day be with me in your presence. But in the meantime, Father, I pray that you will make them one as you and I are one so that Nanaimo, well, he doesn't mention Nanaimo, actually, but he's praying for Nanaimo.

For he says this, I do not only pray for these 12 or 11 now, I pray for all who will come to believe on me through them. That includes you, doesn't it? That includes me. I pray, Father, for all who will come to believe on me through them.

I pray for those in Departure Bay Baptist Church in 2006. I pray, Father, that you will make them one as you and I are one so that Nanaimo will know that I love them. Then he repeats himself.

Look at yourself, John chapter 17, the prayer of Jesus. I pray, Father, that they may be one so that Nanaimo will know that I died for them. Do you want Nanaimo to know the glory of God? The prerequisite is the unity of the people of God.

Not the uniformity of the people of God. We may be different. The body is made up of different parts, made up of toes and hands and fingers and eyes and kidneys.

All different but functioning in different ways but operating together for the health of the body and you and I are commanded by the King of the churches so that the body which is one in Nanaimo will be manifest to this world. When you read of tragedies like 9-11, when you read of hurricanes hitting the Florida coast, when you hear of fires devastating large parts of BC, how do you pray? Do you lose sight of God, that Jesus is still on the throne, that he's still seated at the right hand of the Father? He's still in control. But at times like this when tragedies come, the way we should be praying is, Father, manifest your sons.

Manifest your daughters. The whole world, says Paul, groans. All of creation groans in travail waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

That's the time when the people of God should become evident by their love, by their compassion, by their ministry. Tragedies in this world are opportunities for you and I to reveal the reality of Christ in our love, in our response. That's what Christian love is.

And here Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said, I've heard of your love for one another. These are the people at Ephesus who loved one another. It's very striking when you read the letters of Jesus dictated to John in the book of Revelation.

You know that in chapters 2 and 3, many of you know he dictates seven letters to the seven churches of Ishmael. Or five of those letters, he says words like this, but I have this against you. Some people believe in dispensational truth or church history to deny.

I believe that's possibly true, but I also believe all seven churches are present today. We have the Pergamos church, a church that is political, the Thyatira church, a political church. We have the Pergamos church, which has lost its passion for the things of God.

We have the Laodicean church, which is lukewarm, that he was spewed out of the mouth. We have these churches. And five of them have condemnation, but two of them have no condemnation at all.

They're the church of Smyrna, and in the world today, the church is much persecuted in many countries. And Philadelphia, the missionary church. The word Philadelphia means those who love the brethren.

God has no condemnation for those who love the brethren. And these people in Ephesus, if they would know God, if Paul's prayer is to come true to them in the revelation of himself, that he might make himself known to them, he says, the reason I'm praying this is to have your love. And I suggest to you that without those, there is no revelation of God.

God has a prerequisite found here for us. Do you know what I find striking? I preach much on this, about love for one another, because I believe it so strongly as being one of the greatest ploys Satan has to destroy the church. I've seen churches split.

I've seen churches fighting one another because of lack of love. I'm not talking about blindness. I'm talking about differences and different thoughts that we work together with.

I find it very striking. I have now been a pastor of two churches, and I came invited to your church to pass your performance, but nobody asked me how much I love the brethren. I think on every job description, may I suggest to you, your committee, before you call the next pastor, when you write out his job description, if you have such a thing, make sure one of the things I travel and speak at youth rallies, but I used to speak to pastors' conferences.

You should teach them this material. And it saddens me when I saw even pastors who couldn't get along with pastors. And I speak as a pastor.

And surely of all people, we should be people who demonstrate what it means to love the brethren. The parish priest of austerity climbed up in a tall church steeple to be nearer God, so that he might pass his word down to the people. And his thought was sent from heaven.

And he dropped it down on the people's heads two times, one day and seven. In his old age, God said, come down and die. So he cried out from the steeple, where are you, God? And the Lord replied, I'm down here among my people.

It is so easy for pastors to be elevated to a position where they're not able to love the people. We're called to be people of love. We're called to be people who demonstrate that.

We're called to be people so that in our love for one another, in our unity with one another, the world might see Jesus in us and be attracted to him. The reason the church is growing in persecuted countries like China and India is because the Christians there are so committed to one another that the world notices. The world sees.

And the world responds. So if these are preconditions, the next question I ask myself is I trust you've all got your Bibles with you. Bring them next Sunday.

If you haven't got them today, please, because if you haven't got your Bible with you, shame on you. I'm being facetious. You can smile when I say that.

Verse 8, in all wisdom and insight, God has made known to us the mysteries of his world. In wisdom and insight. This word insight, the Greek word is thronesis, is what you and I might call common sense.

It's that which we have learned, the experiences we've had. God makes himself known to us by what we see, by what we read, by what we hear from other people. We begin to know something more of God.

God makes himself known to us through our Sunday school class and our minds get an understanding of God. That is thronesis, that is insight. But wisdom, the Greek word sophia, is something very, very much different.

Wisdom is something that comes by revelation. James in his letter says there is a wisdom that comes from the world. Such wisdom is devilish, it's earthly.

It's the kind of wisdom that we call worldly wise. It's the kind of wisdom that you can get when you go to university. They can give you knowledge, they can give you some sort of wisdom, they try to teach you various principles for living.

That is earthly wisdom. But the sophia that we have here, the heavenly wisdom, says James, there is a wisdom that comes from above. And here our author Paul says, I want you to have a revelation of God in the wisdom that he gives.

And he makes himself known to you. Wisdom is a characteristic of the heart. Such wisdom.

The wisdom of the world is a characteristic of the mind. This wisdom is a characteristic of the heart, which is why Paul says may the eyes of your heart be enlightened that you might know the hope of his calling. I'm often struck by the story when the Lord Jesus took his disciples to Mount Hermon.

I'm fascinated by that story. I mentioned it last week to you that he had been with his disciples three years. They'd heard him teach.

They'd seen him perform miracles. They'd collected the baskets of bread and fish. They'd brought people to him for healing.

But in all those three years we never read in any of the gospels that he spent time alone with his disciples. Every time he tried to the crowds came in. And so Mark's gospel is the one I pointed out most clearly.

In the middle of the gospel of Mark the gospel of Mark, by the way, is a book where if you read it it says straightway, straightway and Jesus did this. And it's a book when you read it you get the sense of busy, busy, busy, busy. Rapid fire type of reporting of the life of Jesus is the gospel of Mark.

And then right in the middle of the book he says this and Jesus straightway after a certain event took his disciples to the north of the country. It's a day and a half's journey. He took them to the slopes of Mount Hermon which apparently is a very, very beautiful place looking down upon Caesarea Philippi city.

And there on the slopes of Mount Hermon Jesus is alone with his disciples. This is the first DTS Discipleship Training School. Youth with a Mission didn't invent DTS Jesus did.

For those of you who know anything about Youth with a Mission. This is the first Discipleship Training School. They'd been with him three years.

He's now got them. He says, tell me guys whom do men say that I am? Whom do men in the name of say that I am? A good man. A moral teacher.

An ethical leader. If he's all of those things then he's a liar because he claimed to be the son of God. But he asked them whom do you say whom do men say that I am? And they said well something you John the Baptist come back to life.

You may remember John had his head cut off by Herod. Something you Elijah the prophet come back to life. Something you're another great prophet.

They're different views from the people. Then he said now tell me then who do you think I am? And I find it very striking that it's uneducated Peter is the one who answers. The others had better education.

Several of them had better education than Peter. Peter said you are the Christ the son of God. That's the title of the Messiah.

The promised one. The anointed one. And Jesus replies to Peter blessed are you Simon son of Jonah.

Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. In other words you did not get this from reading books. You did not get this from the University of Jerusalem.

You did not get this from somebody else. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. But my father has revealed it to you.

My father has made revelation of whom I who I am. And that's how you come to know. Not a gnome with a head.

This is a gnome with the innermost being gnome of the heart. Then he said these words. Your name shall no longer be called Simon but you shall be called Peter because I really know who you are.

Is there a precondition to knowing God? I suggest it to you faith and love were two in the scriptures. Their character is right there. And here to Peter he said I know your character.

I know who you really are Peter. You're not Simon a fisherman. You're a rock.

I'm sure Peter didn't feel much like a rock. You're a rock. In fact it's very striking just a few days later or six months later when Jesus is taken and Peter comes into Pilate's judgment hall.

You know we often condemn him because the cockerel crowed and he denied the Savior three times. Remember that story? We often condemn Peter without realizing that all the other disciples have fled except John. John is right there in the courtroom where Peter's in the kitchen.

He's the only other one there. At least he's near. The others have fled.

And a little girl comes up to him and says you belong to Jesus don't you? And because of his offense Jesus said he would be offended. Because of his offense he denies the Lord. And that rock crumbles like a bit of sandstone.

There's no rock there. But Jesus knew who he was deep down inside. And knew that one day this man was truly going to be the rock.

This was the man on the day of Pentecost who stood and preached the great message. This was the man who tradition tells us was crucified upside down. This was the man who became a rock.

Because Jesus knew the character. That's why God revealed himself to Peter because he knew the character of the man. Not because he had the intellect to understand but because God knew the character of this man deep inside was a rock.

And Jesus is only naming him to confirm the character that God has seen in Peter. To whom God is willing to make known this revelation. Jesus the Christ.

I like to run the songs we sang. I like a lot of the songs we sang today. David was a man who longed to know God.

David cried out words like this. As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after thee. But the man in the scriptures that most impresses me about hunger for God was Moses.

If you read in the book of Exodus chapter 33 you'll read there the long account of Moses. I'll paraphrase but you can read it yourself. Moses has come down from the mountain where he's been given the tablets of stone.

He has been face to face with God. His face shone so much so that he was embarrassed and he put a cloth over it as it began to fade. But as he comes down the mountains he discovers to his horror that the children of Israel allowed remaining in the valley had now made themselves a calf of bronze.

A gold from all the ornaments they brought out of Egypt. And they're beginning to worship the calf. And Moses throws the tablets on the ground and he's angry with the people.

And he takes the tabernacle where he's supposed to come to meet God and he takes it outside the camp. So that the people of Israel knowing his anger knowing that God is angry seeing the mountain covered with a fire and the black cloud can see the tent out in the country and they see Moses going there with Joshua his young servant. And God says to Moses Moses I want you to lead these people I want you to take them on for the journey.

And Moses said well who will go with me? And God said well I'll send Joshua with you. He said oh no aren't you coming? Because God he said if you don't come with me I ain't going. That's my prayer.

Now when I come here to speak on Sunday morning I pray and I assure you I pray this each time Father I'm not going to stand in a pulpit unless you're willing to be with me because unless your anointing is upon what I say and what I'm saying is earthly wisdom. If your pastor speaks up here from his own knowledge it is earthly wisdom he'll do you not one iota of good for eternity. We need the anointing of God because we're but weak vessels of his word.

And I cried to him as Moses cried God I'm not going to speak unless you're with me. Moses said I'm not going God unless you're with me. And God said okay I will go with you.

I will go with you. And then Moses says these words and I like these words so much Oh God I'm paraphrasing you and I have talked face to face. I met you at the burning bush and I experienced something of your presence your awesome presence where I took my shoes off my feet and I fell down there at that burning bush when you called me to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

I've experienced you in my life probably more than any other man. You call me your friend you say you know me by name. Oh God please show me your glory.

He wants a deeper revelation of God. Please show me your glory. And God said Moses I cannot show you my glory for if you truly see my glory you will surely die.

But I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to hide myself in a cave. I want to hide you in a cave.

I'm going to put my hand over the doorway of the cave and I'm going to walk past. And as I walk past I'm going to take my hand away and you will see my hind parts. You will see the effect of my passing.

I've mentioned the Welsh revival. The Welsh revival was man seeing the effects of God's passing. We were seeing the hind part of his glory passing through.

God was willing to reveal that to Moses. But then he said these words Moses I surely do know you by name. And because I know you by name I'm going to tell you my name.

You see in Bible terms the name of a person speaks of his character. What was the name of the Ephesian people? Faithful and loving. That's their character.

That's their name. What's your name Moses? Well Moses no no what does God know you as Moses? He knows your name and your character who you are deep inside he knows you so well Moses is willing to reveal himself to you. He's going to reveal his name his character to you.

Bible names are very important. You shall call his name Jesus the angel said to Mary because he shall save his people from their sin. The name Jesus means saviour.

Can you imagine growing up as a young man called Jacob? Jacob was a second of twins as he came out he was holding onto his brother Esau's heel and his parents said oh look at him he's trying to take Esau's place. So they called him usurper deceiver. That's what the name Jacob means.

I hope none of you got a child called Jacob or a grandchild called Jacob. That's what it means. And of course that really was his character because later what did he do? He usurped the position of the inheritance from his brother Esau.

He was a deceiver all his life he was a schemer. He schemed and planned how he could even defeat God in his planning until he was really wrestled with God and God had to smite him and weaken him in his strong point and he limped. Can you imagine that young man growing up he meets a young lady what's your name? Deceiver.

I didn't get that what's your name? Deceiver. Can you imagine when he goes to apply for his first driving licence for a chariot he's got to fill in the form and they say what's your name? Deceiver. That's his character.

And in Bible terms the character of a person is registered in their name. Many of the wives of Jacob when they named their sons they named them Ramonis son of my sorrow and such names. It's a wonderful Bible study to look in the Bible see what the meaning of names.

And God says to Moses Moses I know your name and because I know your name I'm going to tell you my name. I am the God who is faithful and true. I'm the God who forgives sins and iniquities.

I'm the God who washes away all iniquities but I'm a God of justice I will hold men accountable. I'm a God of this character this is who I am. Do you know God this morning like that? Do you know a God who is

merciful and true? Is your knowledge simply head knowledge because you learnt it in Sunday school or is it a heart knowledge that you've experienced that mercy you've experienced that grace you've experienced that love you've experienced that faithfulness because God wants to make himself known but he can only make himself known to the limit of how much he knows your name.

There's a wonderful book called Pilgrim's Progress if you haven't read it you must read it. When I was a school boy it was required reading. John Bunyan was imprisoned in the 17th century late 1600s in Bedford prison he was a shoemaker and he wrote this book Pilgrim's Progress it tells a story there of people a pilgrim met on his journey and they've all got characteristic names they were timorous and doubtful who fled from the roaring lions those are names because that was their character there was Mr.

Worldly Wise Man and others that he met in Vanity Fair as you read through those names maybe you'll recognise your name there there are also others who had names like Overcomer and Conqueror and if God is going to reveal himself to us as a church to us as a people to you as an individual depends on your name how does God look at you does he know you as faithful one or does he know you as hypocrite does he know you as doubter or does he know you as conqueror does he know you as overcomer or does he know you as weak does he know what is your name because if you want God to reveal himself to you the price the price is your name God is asking for a people who allow the spirit of God to so transform and as he transforms Simon that his name becomes that which God is pleased to reveal himself to

my prayer for you is the prayer of Paul to the Ephesians that God might make himself known to us over these coming months that he might transform us to become a people whose name is pleasing to him as individuals and as a congregation that through us he might bring glory to his own name we live in a world of secular humanism secular humanism says that the end of all man is the fulfillment of man and we've got that in the church we have so many in the church who come to Jesus because of what Jesus can do for them God has revealed himself in many wonderful ways to me in my life but one of the most important ways was when I was in Mexico in 1998 and with this I draw to a close this little story I took a party from my church down to Mexico to work in an orphanage I'd been discipling them for

four months it was a school I don't know a six month school at my church and we're in the orphanage in Francisco my Mexican friend is taking photographs of the little children there to send back to Canada and America on behalf of compassion you've heard of compassion? little children were standing with a number board on their chest ME45 and Francisco would take the photograph and then somebody would say ME45 is little Victoria Sanchez Mendoza the girl we sponsored and they'd send a photograph up and we saw it and we sponsored that child that's what they did and while he's taking these photographs the next one would come up and it was right about 45 or 46 one of my girls Cindy is sitting on a gutter in the orphanage and her arms are around two little children and Cindy's crying she can't

wipe the tears away because her hands are occupied and Francisco my Mexican friend looks at Cindy and he says these words Cindy our hearts break every day you come to Mexico and you see this poverty and your heart breaks one day our hearts break every day and I had a witness such a strong witness at that moment in my spirit of hearing my father say my heart breaks every day and I began to realize that the God I knew that I worshiped for being my savior my leader my guide my health my peace my joy my supplier my Jehovah Jireh my provider that God who had done all these things wonderfully for me was calling me to bless him too he revealed his broken heart to me and my life was changed I found it uncomfortable passing a comfortable little church after that I wanted to be on the mission field

I wanted to be where hurting people were where hungry people were because I came to know something more of the passion of Jesus Christ and I realized he did not exist for my blessing I existed for his blessing secular humanism and Christian humanism has a God who exists for our blessing that we might have joy and happiness brothers and sisters the calling of a Christian is to bring honor and glory to the king of kings that's our calling not that he might bring happiness and joy and blessing to us he might even call us to go through the prisons of persecution he might even call us to go through the places of martyrdom like the young men did in Ecuador and many others he might call us to pain and suffering because through pain and suffering he perfected his own son but he perfected his own

son that you and I might be brought in to become a people who bring honor and glory to him and I pray that he will reveal that to you also this time amen let's pray father like David of old our hearts cry out to you as the deer pants for the water so our souls long after you as Moses of old cried out oh God oh God show us your glory you know our hearts lord you know our names I pray father that you will transform us by your spirit that we will become a people so hungry for you that you will be pleased to reveal yourself to us not just the God who provides for our needs but the God who calls us to be a blessing to him may we feel not only your hand of blessing upon us as a church and upon us as individuals but may we also feel the very heart throb of the pain your heart carries for this

lost world have your way in us lord we pray bring honor bring glory to your name for we ask you in Jesus name amen

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