

Christ's Passion of Intimacy With Us

by Gbile Akanni

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being open to God's visitation and removing any excuses that may be hindering His relationship with us.

Duration: 1:16:27

Topics: "Intimacy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not missing the divine visitation in one's life. He urges the audience to be open to God's calling and not delay in responding to Him. The preacher encourages individuals to have a personal conversation with God, acknowledging their delay in accepting Him and surrendering their lives. The sermon draws parallels between the lover and the beloved in the Song of Solomon, highlighting God's desire for intimacy and fellowship with each individual.

Transcript

You will remember that the scripture says, in John chapter 15 it says, it says, I no longer call you servants, but I call you friends, because servants does not know what his Lord is doing. But I call you my friend because everything that my Father has told me, I have told you. So, this meeting, as we begin, I'd like you to let's note that it's going to be special meetings with the Lord.

And I want you to expect that the Lord will walk into this meeting, he's going to draw you out, he's going to call you to himself, he's going to do something in your spirit that will bring about a turnaround to the glory of his name. We're all praying for revival, but each time we cry for revival, we must not forget that every revival, no matter how big, how widespread it became, is actually a restoration of relationship between a man and the Lord. And it could begin here, we could begin to have revival inside here, because you are getting a cross back to the Lord in a very special way.

So this night, I'd like us to take our study, we're going to study quite a bit before we go to pray. Psalms of Solomon is where I felt we should begin our study tonight, Psalms of Solomon. You find it, you find it before the book of Isaiah, and after the Ecclesiastes, that's where you find the Psalms of Solomon.

Are you already there? Right? Psalms of Solomon and chapter five is what we're going to study together briefly tonight. There are so much there, but I just felt we can begin tonight to deal with Jesus' own desire for intimate relationship, intimate work with him. So while we begin to talk about our desire for revival, our desire for a closer work with the Lord, I want us to keep knowing that Jesus himself is the initiator of it.

Jesus himself is the one longing for it. Actually, in every case, if the Lord doesn't come down to look for a man, we may never be able to find him. If he doesn't come to where we are at our levels, we may never be able to climb up to reach him.

But grace brought him to us. Grace makes him available to us. Grace drew him nearer us.

Grace places him at our doorstep. Grace brings him to knock on our door and said, if anyone hears my voice, and he opens, I will come in. So shall we please turn to Psalms of Solomon chapter five? And there are 16 verses in that passage, and I'd like us to read it together.

Would you like to join me as we read together? If I read verse one, I want you to read verse two. Let's read it responsibly together until we finish in verse 16. I am come into my guardian, my sister, my spouse.

I have gathered my mare with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk.

Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. I have put off my coat. How shall I put it on? I have washed my feet.

How shall I defy them? I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with mare, and my fingers with sweet-smelling mare upon the handles of the lock. 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. What is thy beloved more than another beloved? Who thou fearest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us? His head is as the most fine gold.

His locks are bushy and black as a raven. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers. His lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling mare.

His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. May the Lord bring increase unto his word as we study tonight, and as we seek his face together in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now, there are a few things when you come into this particular chapter and the issues that the Lord may want to highlight. But the first point I want to begin to look at tonight, as we look at this passage together, is the agony of missing a divine moment to connect with the Lord. The terrible danger that comes upon a man's life, no matter how many years he had wanted to walk with God, or to meet the kairos moment of a divine visitation.

Sometimes people miss their own time of visitation, and for several years they could never recover. And so, while we are looking at our meetings in these next three nights, it might appear quiet, but I sense, and as we have been praying, I sense that God is about to do something. God is about to cause something to begin, first in our individual hearts.

And who knows how far God wants to go with every heart that is open to him. Now, let's look at these 16 verses. We cannot study all of that tonight, but we can paraphrase them and bring all the issues out.

Now, this setting is the setting of the lover and the beloved, which in my mind, it would look like the Lord Jesus knocking on our lives and wanting to share fellowship and intimacy with you, even as an individual.

And it looks as if, as we begin to read, you will see a kind of conversation, and it is this conversation that I'm hoping that we can set to draw the issues out as regards intimacy that God is seeking with each of our lives as we talk about a closer walk with God. Now, verse 1, I am coming to my garden, my sister, my spouse.

I have gathered my mare with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk.

Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Now, that looks like an initiative that God takes for each one of us. It looks like a step that the Lord Jesus takes towards every heart that he longs to draw to himself.

I am come into my garden. I am come, my sister, my bride. I have gathered my mare with my spice.

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk. And, you know, he was expressing a strong desire which was flowing from the earlier chapter.

But my concern is the development which is a critical issue for me and maybe for you tonight. He said, I sleep, but my heart wakes. Please take note of some of the words.

I sleep, but my heart wakes. It is the voice of my beloved that knocks. Say, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.

For my head is filled with dew and my lungs with the drops of the night. Permit me to spend a bit of time here. Now, I'm wondering, a man that says, I sleep, but my heart is awoken.

I am sleepy, but something is tearing in my heart. I am not awake, I'm not active. I am not, you know, I'm not awake, I'm not active.

But my heart is not rested. My heart wakes. It is the voice of my beloved that is knocking.

Now, do you know that one of the very, very critical issues that I note about any genuine person who has ever experienced the walk with God or who has ever been touched by the Spirit of God before is that even though there is this sleepiness, there is this drowsiness, there is this, there is this, let me just use the word sleep, that makes a man less active than what he ought to be. But you will notice that there is something in your heart that is restless. Even when you meet a backslider who has moved away from the Word of God, any time you meet him, you will notice that he is not at peace.

You will know that he is not at peace. He may have money, he may have plenty of food to eat, he may live in a very big house, he may be appearing to be doing nice or to be doing well ordinarily externally, but inside of him, there is a restlessness. There is no man that his heart can be at peace when he has not reconnected with the Lord.

Even when you see a man that is a drunkard and is speaking very, very vulgar language against the Lord and against the Word of God, if you get close to him, you know that his heart is restless. You know that he is not at peace. What causes that? What causes that? He said, it is the voice of my beloved that is knocking.

If you are sitting here tonight, even though you are not in the best of relationship that you ought to be with the Lord, one of the things that you cannot deny is that your heart is not at peace. Who causes that

restlessness within every heart? It is the longing of Jesus to seek relationship with us. The reason why you find yourself not satisfied is because the Lord Jesus, who is longing for a closer walk with you to keep you not sleepy but on fire, is the one that is saying, but I am not in the right place in your life.

You have not given me the correct space that I am supposed to be with you. You are not in the good place yet. He said, it is the voice of my beloved that knocks.

Because the Bible says, Jesus said, behold, I stand at the door and I do what? And I knock, and I knock, and I knock. You might pretend, you might try to use bold face as if no, no, nothing is wrong, nothing is going on, nothing is, nothing, nothing. You may do that, but the truth of the matter is that there is that silent voice asking, are you doing well? Is it well with your soul? Are you in the right relationship with me? Is this how you started with me? Are you living right? There is that voice knocking.

And I want to suggest tonight that the knocking and the speaking voice of the Lord Jesus is first of all an assurance that he is longing to relate with me, he is longing to relate with you, he is longing. When that voice no more sounds in a man's heart, that's when you are in a very dangerous condition. That's when you are in a very, very difficult situation that is a pitiable situation.

When you no longer hear the nudging of the Lord Jesus, when the Spirit of God no longer calls you, when the Word of God no longer speaks inside of your heart, then you are in a very, very bad, bad condition. Now, let's go on and see where the challenge actually lies. I sleep, but my heart wakes.

It is the voice of my beloved that knocks, saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefied. And I was looking at how Jesus considers, look at the kind of thing he is saying about this lady. He is saying, open to me, open to me.

Now, did you see the meaning of the word, open to me? He wasn't saying, come out. Did you get that? He wasn't saying, come out. What is he saying? Open to me.

Open to me. Let me in. My sister, my love, my dove, my undefied.

Now, all these appellations that have been put together here, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefied. I'm looking at this. I say, Lord, is that how you look at your church? Is that your picture? Is that what you are thinking about me? Are you looking at me as your brother? You are looking at me as your sister, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefied.

For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. Now, the picture I'm getting is, here is one who is seeking intimacy, who is seeking warmth of love, warmth of relationship, but he has kept outside there in the dry cold of the night. The picture I'm getting here is that of one who is longing to come in, to come in, but now the door is shut.

The cold, the dew of the night, they have dripped on his head. And he said, look, my locks have been with the drops of the night. My head is filled with dew.

Open to me, my sister. Open to me, open to me. A very strong appeal from the Lord.

Even though many of us may imagine and say, we are the ones who say, oh Lord, oh Lord, come down, Lord, come down. But the truth of the matter, I want you to hear this tonight, is that Jesus himself is the one I say, you are the one who has not opened to me. The dryness that you are experiencing as an

individual is not because the Lord is reluctant to come.

It is that you have been sluggish to open to him. Even tonight, he says, if anyone hears my voice and opens, I will do what? I will come in. I will stop with him and he with me.

I and my Father, we will come and we will make our abode inside of him. If there is dryness in any of our lives, may I suggest to you, it is not the reluctance of the Lord. It might be your own sluggishness to open to the Lord.

And that's what gives me courage. That because the Lord is eagerly longing to come, is eagerly longing to bring revival to you as an individual, it's possible for you to experience a divine visitation, a divine impartation, even from tonight. Now, let's see excuses.

Excuses. I was going to call it unreasonable excuses that procrastinate God's visitation into a man's life. And I wish that as we study together tonight, we will look into our hearts individually and you will ask one very important question.

Why can't I have the Lord in my heart tonight? Why can't I have his restoration power in my life tonight? Why can't something new start with me tonight? Why not tonight? Why not tonight? You remember there is a song we used to sing. Oh, why not tonight? Why not tonight? What do you imagine will postpone the visitation of the Lord in your own life tonight? Why not tonight? Why not tonight? What do you imagine will hinder God from doing a new thing in your own life, in your own experience, even tonight? Why not tonight? When he himself is already ready, eager, and he's knocking and he's saying, Open to me. But now let's see excuses.

Now, verse 3. Look at the excuses. The first excuse. What did he say? What was the first excuse in that verse 3? I have put off my coat.

I have put off my coat. That's why I cannot open to you. I have put off my coat.

That's why I cannot open to you. I've already undressed. But I wanted to see what is strange about this.

Excuse me. What is strange about this? If he said, Come out. Come out.

Come out. Let's go out. That would have been a good reason to say, No.

I can't come out. Why? Because I have already put off my coat. I can't come out.

I'm already in my pyjamas. I can't come out like this. But you see, if this man that is knocking was the husband of this woman, which we know, is it right that you went out and you were coming in and you came to your house? Your wife is in the room and you are knocking and you call her and say, Oh, please.

I'm the one. Open to me. And then she says, Sorry.

I can't open to you because I have already put off my dress. Excuse me. Is it reasonable? Is that what a normal wife would say to her husband? Eh? Excuse me.

Who has the room? Is it not the husband? And who has the woman? Is it not the husband? The scripture said in the beginning, they were both naked and they were not ashamed. The man is not saying, Please come out. He said, Open to me.

Let me get in. And if at all you were even putting off your coat, before who else should this woman have put off her coat? I'm asking. We're not asking her to come outside.

She's in her room. She's in her bedroom. And her supposed husband is coming in.

And she's saying, No. I can't open to you because I put off my coat. Now there are three issues I want to quickly note with you about this kind of excuse that postpones divine visitation.

Number one. Do you know that the lover that is coming to you is not looking for a dressed up person. You dress up to go and meet somebody who should not know or see your nakedness.

Isn't it? But a genuine encounter with God, the best place to have that encounter is the place of absolute nakedness where you have opened your life. Where you are saying, Just as I am without one place. Just as I am without any cover up.

Actually, if you are going to have a genuine intimacy with God, you will still have to remove those clothes. Am I right? You will still need to have undressed and say, Lord, here I am. And as our brother talked about, you must be circumcised.

I've never seen anybody being circumcised physically. And he's not undressed. But this man said, this woman said, I have put off my coat so I can't let you in.

That's the first note I'm getting there. The second point I'm saying, I have put off my coat, I can't let you in. It's that kind of relationship that is a relationship of a cover up.

Do you know, brothers and sisters, you won't progress with your work with God as long as you are relating with him under the cover of a cloak. Some people are working with God under the cloak of religion, under the cloak of church activities, under the cloak of some things. No.

Will you please remove the cloak tonight? Will you please open up to the Lord and say, just as I am. Nobody will get anywhere with God in a genuine revival who is covering up. The day you are ready to say, Lord, just as I am, nothing to hide, nothing to hide.

It's possible that, you see, you are giving us an impression, even in the church here, that you are doing well. And there's no way in which our reverend could know that you are not doing well. But when you are going to experience a genuine move of God, you remove all that cloak and open up to the Lord and say, Lord, this is me.

People think I am prayerful, but sincerely speaking, I don't have any prayer life. My secret life is not like people think about me on the outside. I need a touch.

I need a divine touch. Now, what is the third issue I'm seeing there? I have put off my coat. My question is that, you said, I have put off.

I have put off. If it was actually necessary to wear a coat, he who put off, can he not put on? I'm asking. What does it take a man who put off to put on? If at all it was even a need to put on before you open to him, why can't you put it on? And I'm hearing the man outside saying, what are you saying? You have put off your coat for what? Yes? Does that hinder me from coming to your life? Does that stop me from entering my room? Does that stop me from coming in? What are you talking about? My lover, what are you talking about? What is this kind of excuse you are giving to keep the Lord outside? This night? What is

it that you are struggling with that you not open up to Jesus and say, please come in.

Just come in. In my nakedness, I'm inviting you in. In my openness, please come.

Just come in. It's yours. Now the woman said, how shall I put it on? A very strange question.

How shall I put it on? And if I were the man, I'd say, how did you put it on? Just the way you put it on is the way to put it on. But the question for me is that, does she need to put it on when it is not a matter of come out, come out, let's come and meet a visitor. No.

Say, let me come in. The second useless excuse, I have washed my feet. I have washed my feet.

Can I find out from you, when do you wash your feet? If we were in Africa, for example, when do you wash feet? Eh? When you are outside. When you are about to come in. Imagine during the times of rains and all of that, and you have gone out to the farm.

You know that once you want to come in, the first thing you do out there is where you hang your coat, isn't it? And you remove the boot. And I've gone somewhere where me and my wife went, and as we are coming in, they brought water for us to wash our feet. Because when you are coming from outside, you are bringing death.

Are you getting me? Now, this man, said, open to me, let me come in. I thought what she wanted to say that, have you washed your feet? So that you don't bring death to our bedroom. That was not what she said.

What did she say? I cannot open to you because I have washed my feet. Very unreasonable. I have washed my feet.

So that will not allow me to open to you, into your room. And you know, it was not reasonable to me. I couldn't understand what is the washing of these feet that could hinder the Lord from stepping into this woman's life.

How shall I defy them? Very strange. Very strange. You know, it's unreasonable to me because I'm just thinking.

Are you thinking with me, sir? Now, I'm just thinking that, let's imagine that the bedroom was unsuited. That is to say, that inside their room, there is the bath. So when she washed her feet, supposedly in the bath, how did she move from the bath? How did she move? Did she not move on her feet? Did she move on her head? And she did not discover, she did not consider moving from the bath where she had just washed her feet, right into the bed where she is going to lie down.

She did not regard that movement as defilement. How could moving in the same room, because that's where she stepped out from the bath and went to go and lie down, how did she consider moving on the same spot just to open for the lover? How could she consider that as defilement? What I'm trying to say to you is that what makes many people never to open to the Lord, usually, they are unreasonable excuses. What keeps many, many men dry inside their hearts, keeping the Lord outside, usually flimsy excuses.

Empty excuses. And what I'm praying that the Holy Spirit will do for me and you tonight, is for the Spirit of God to help you to think, what are the excuses why you shouldn't have been revived? What are the reasons that you are giving me to have kept the Lord outside? Why are you feeling cold inside when the

Lord is knocking and say, permit me to come in. What is the issue? And look at the frantic effort.

In verse 4 it says, and my beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door. Are you getting the pictures? The picture is as if inside this door as if there is a hole, as if he could put one finger in, whether he could push the in lock. Frantically he was seeking to enter.

He said, my beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door and my bowers were moved for him. I wanted you to note something. He said, my bowers were moved for him, but she did not move.

How many times you have heard the word of God. You have seen as if Jesus is putting his finger into the hole. As if he is probing into your heart.

You are moved, but instead of moving in action, in obedience you are only moved in the heart. You did not move. Sometimes God will bring a word.

Sometimes it is a song that we are singing. As if Jesus is probing into your inner heart with a song. And you see that something in you is moving.

Something in you is asking, why don't you give to the Lord? Why don't you give to the Lord? Why don't you confess? Why don't you cry out? Why don't you step out? Why don't you go to the altar? You are moved inside. But instead of moving in obedience, you did not move. How many times some of you, the Spirit of God has moved you so that this could have been the beginning of divine visitation in your life.

But you say, not now. Not now. I will do it next week.

Sometimes the Spirit of God has moved you and all you needed to do is to say, Oh God, step into my life afresh. Then you look. You look like this and you saw maybe another sister or another brother and you say, how can I do that? No.

They would think maybe I am not serious. They would think maybe and then you allowed what you thought others would say. It made you not to move in response to the moving of the Spirit of God within your heart.

How many times the Spirit of God had wanted to move your life into action but you postponed, you procrastinated your response. My beloved Putin is earned by the hole of the door. And I was saying, what is that hole? And I am saying, there are many things God has created.

It looks like loopholes that he was putting his finger in in order to draw you, in order to move you, in order to get you into a fresh encounter, a fresh experience with the power of God. But what did you do with all such opportunities of grace? What did you do? You postponed your action. You didn't respond.

Now, when she now decided to respond, look at verse 5, 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. I was wondering, how did she get this myrrh this time? I think it must be the drinks from the hand of the Lord. But now he said, I opened to my beloved.

Did you see the big bot in verse 6? What is the big bot? For my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. Do you remember the Bible says, Seek the Lord while you may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Am I right? Do you know that there is a time when even though you will rise and say yes, he will have withdrawn himself. Do you know that the yearning that is moving in your heart now, the very deep desire in your heart to want to be close to the Lord, to want to experience the power of God, do you know that it may not remain there forever? Do you know that the movings, the conviction that is coming in your spirit, your desire to pray that is coming in your spirit, do you know that it's for a time? And if you don't yield to your own time of visitation, the Lord will withdraw himself. He said, by the time I opened to my beloved, my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.

My soul failed when he spoke. I sought him but I could not find him. I sought him but I could not find him.

I called him but he gave me no answer. The tragedy of a procrastinated obedience. This night as we will be calling on God together, and as we will be seeking the face of God from the beginning of these next three days, may I request that what you need to do tonight, don't keep it till next week.

Your response to the Savior tonight, don't say maybe when I come tomorrow, maybe Bravelly will say that again. He may have withdrawn. The yearning that is rising in your spirit, even in this night, don't postpone it.

It may be a time, a time limited experience that God is offering you. Oh, I open to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. There are young people that miss us.

I hope you will open to the Lord at the right time. I have met several people that when the Lord knocked on their lives, they did not open. Before they would get into a wrong marriage, the Lord was knocking, knocking, knocking.

They did not agree. Before they would defy themselves, the Lord came and knocked, but they did not open. It was only after their first marriage has failed, and the man has beaten them and pushed them out, and their relationship has scattered, that's when they say, oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord, come to my life, come to my life, come to my life.

Where were you when the Lord was putting his hand on the hole? What were you doing when Jesus was saying, my son, my daughter, open to me, open to me, open to me? What were your excuses before things went too bad? But the challenge for me tonight, which I now want you to see, where I want to stop for us to pray together, I want you to look at it now. After the Master had withdrawn himself, after the Lord had gone, I want you to see what he said. She said, my soul failed when he spoke.

May I say to you, you know sometimes we try to be religious, oh, when I heard the word of God, when I heard the word of God, in fact, my spirit was moved. What did you do? What did you do? The word of God has not benefited you until you obey it, until you stand up to act on what God says to you. You have not yet obeyed and it has no benefit.

He who hears the word of God and does not do it, is like a man that looks himself where? In a mirror. And immediately forgets what manner of man he was. It's not enough to hear.

It's very critical to act, to obey, to take a step and say, Lord, if these three days again had been arranged for me to have a fresh encounter with you, to do a closer walk with you, I would not procrastinate it. I would not postpone it. Somebody may have been brought into this meeting by divine providence.

You are about to take a decision. You are about to say yes to something that is wrong and the Holy Spirit brought you here. And you are saying, ah, oh, but I've already put on my clothes, but I've already done this, but I've already, may I say to you, all that you say you have done is nothing if you will open to him.

You have not gone too far to open to the Lord. You say, I've washed my feet and so what? Even if walking to go and meet the Lord meant washing your feet again, don't you know that it's Jesus that washes people's feet and washes it well? Don't you know that the cleansing power is in his hand? He said, I've washed my feet. What did you wash your feet? If Jesus has not cleansed a man, who can cleanse him? And he said, come, open to me.

Let me come. I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart.

What excuse will you have tonight not to experience revival? That's my question. What do you think you will say and Jesus will still be standing out there tonight? Now when she had missed opportunity, said, I sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer.

The watchman that went about the city found me. Now, did you see the problems? When he was knocking, what did he say? Open to me. He didn't say come out.

He didn't ask her to come out. He said, look, the dew has fallen on my head. My locks are wet with the dews of the night.

Open to me. Let me come in. I want to stay with you.

I'm not asking you to go out. Come, let me come in. She didn't.

Now, when a man refuses to open his life or her life to the Lord, for the Lord to come in, you know the tendency, what will happen is that you will find yourself on the street. You will find yourself on the street of the world. You will find yourself in dangerous places.

Now, let's see it. Let's quickly read together with me. The watchman that went about the city found me.

This is a man and this is a person that will not open to the Lord to come into his life. Now, where is she now? Excuse me. Where is she now that the man, the watchman that went about in the city, they found her? Where is she now, please? She's now outside.

She's now roaming about, looking for what was not lost. She was now moving here and there. And now, let's see the matter.

They smote me. They smote me. The tragedy.

When a man refuses the love of Jesus, oh my God, you will make yourself vulnerable unto wicked men. When a life will not open to Jesus and say, Lord, please come in, you will open your life to dangerous people, people that have no passion for your life. They smote me.

They smote me. And they wounded me. They wounded me.

I wanted to see what they did. The keepers of the world took away my veil from me. You know the meaning of that? They tore they tore my my glory.

They took away my veil from me. If I were just talking to young, young men and young ladies, this issue, the veil that they tore away from her, would not be ordinary clothes. It would be what makes your life unique.

The thief cometh not but to do what? To steal, to kill, and to do what? To destroy. That's what he come for. He said, when they found me, oh God, they smote me.

They wounded me. The keepers of the world took away my veil from me. That's a beautiful woman that Jesus longed to relate with.

But now he's on the streets. Do you know that if we don't open to him, we will open our lives to strangers? If we don't give Jesus the right place in our lives, we'll make ourselves vulnerable in the hand of the enemy. So now, let's see.

Let's see. I charge you, oh daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I'm sick of love. Now, this looks very, very strange to me.

Who is she now, looking and talking to in order to find the Lord? The daughters of Jerusalem. As I've read these scriptures over and over again, I've found that the kind of people that she's talking to here, they are not passionate about the Lord. Did you see their question? They say, what is your beloved more than another beloved? Did you see? What's peculiar about your beloved? What is special about your Jesus? What is it that you're going up and down and say we should, what is your beloved more than another beloved? To them, to them, her beloved is nothing.

It's not different from any other. You can see blasphemy in their mouths. You can see their attitude towards the Lord.

What is his difference? Older affairs among women. What is your beloved more than another beloved that you are telling us, you are charging us like that? Now I saw this lady describing her beloved. My beloved is white and ruddy, is the cheapest among 10,000, his head is as the most fine gold, his locker bushy and black as a raven.

Now, if she knows all of this, what should she have done? Eh? She should have opened. If she so much cherished her beloved, what is this poetic song she's now singing to a man she has rejected? And I want to say to you, it bothers me a bit that we have beautiful songs here, we have beautiful songs here and this is my own problem. This is where I face a very big challenge.

Each time I take these hymns, two things come to me. I found that those people that wrote these hymns, they wrote it in revival. Look at the song we've just sung before we took the word of God this evening.

Look at the deep, deep longing that they have expressed to the Lord. Do you know that these songs that we now sing, they were the songs that when they were singing it in those days, they would be crying. Sometimes they cannot finish two stanzas before all of them would be bowed on their faces because they are not just singing.

It's a communion with the Lord. But unfortunately, do you know what I'm discovering? Those who have not opened to the Lord, those who have kept Him outside, they are now busy singing highly poetic songs to the Lord that they have not opened to. Is that not hypocrisy? Eh? How could we stand up and sing this wonderful, wonderful great song and our heart is cold? How can I be singing these kind of songs of

commitment and my spirit is not on fire? That is the danger that the church has come into.

We sing songs of people who encounter God in revival. We sing their expression of love for the Savior when we have shut our heart against Him. So as I saw her, oh my beloved is white and ruddy, is the cheapest among 10,000.

You know, it's like the kind of song we used to sing. It's like we stand and say, oh, oh Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end. We sing it.

We bring tenor. We bring alto. We bring treble.

We bring bass to sing. But, and Jesus is standing out there. He said, but you have not opened to me.

You sing my good songs, but you have not opened to me. You describe me so well, but you have not opened to me. Each time we raise these hymns, that's why as Brother Philip asked us to take some of those songs, the first thing that challenged me, I said, Lord, Lord, we have great heritage.

Heritage. See, all that I am and have, they are your gifts, so free, in joy, in grief, through life, oh Lord, for you. And when I see your face, my ransom so shall be, through all eternity, something for thee.

How I wish we couldn't sing that song unless it has become our testimony. Do you know that if every time we call a song, nobody sings it unless it is an expression of their heart, you know that we will have revivals. Eh? Do you know that if each time we want to open our mouth, something say, but you have not given me that kind of space in your life.

Keep your mouth shut. Do you know that we'll have a more real church? Do you know that every heart will have been under a serious conviction of the Holy Spirit because we'll be singing from our hearts. But now we have come to a situation where we know the tunes, we enjoy the melody, we can play the organ, and we can even close our eyes and sing the words, but Jesus is still outside.

Tonight, brothers and sisters, I want to finally ask you, why do you think he can't come in tonight? Why should he be kept outside any further? What's the excuse? Even as I'm talking tonight, Jesus is standing there and say, I want to come. You are not as eager to have the Lord within your breasts as the Lord himself. If we lift up our hearts and say, Lord, the space is available for you.

Come, come, Lord Jesus. Come and do a new thing with me. Come, come.

I'm open to you. I'm naked to you. Change anything you need to change in my life.

Circumcise my heart. Take away anything you don't like in my life. The dearest idol I have known, please uproot it from my heart, but don't leave me alone.

You know that will be right. Even tonight, that will be right. Even tonight.

But you could just nod your head and say, Lord Jesus, not today. Not today. Let me conclude by telling you a little story.

A testimony. I was bringing up a disciple some years ago. And you know, sometimes we are good Christians until it comes to the time of marriage.

Sometimes a sister is a good sister until the time of choice of who to marry comes. And this sister is always in the Bible study and fellowship and all of this. But when the time for choice of who to marry came, hey, there was a matter.

There was this young man that they have known themselves when she was an unbeliever when she has not met the Lord. And I thought that she has broken all such relationships so that she can go with God. But after some few years, this young man just suffered.

And I remember while reading the word of God when this young man came in. And I'm asking the sister, I said, who is this man? And she said, well, he's my friend. She said, friend? Is he a child of God? Do you not unequally yoke together with an unbeliever? You know what she said? I know that's what you will say.

I know that's what you will say. No, no, no, no, that's not what I will say. I thought you will say, I know that that's what God says.

When men want to disobey God, they begin to acclaim God's word to a preacher. When people want to disobey God, they say, in that church, they make life difficult for somebody. Who makes life difficult for you? Don't you know that it's your heart that is deceiving you like this? The truth of God's word, you can't change it.

I said, is this man a child of God? Is he born again? Does it mean that anybody that does not come to this fellowship is not born again? Who told you that somebody has to be in this fellowship before we are sure that he is born again? Why do you always have an earlier than doubt attitude? I said, I'm only asking a question. Is he a child of God? I'm not saying whether does he come for this fellowship or not. Is he born again? Apparently.

I discovered that her heart has already departed from the word of God. And, you know, I was a very stubborn man myself. Stubborn for the word of God.

So, when I noticed that this young man is arriving, I also went to the house. I carried my Bible. And I was going to confront the young man.

I said, brother, are you a child of God? You know, this sister is a child of God and she cannot marry an unbeliever. I thought that if I puncture it like that, my sister will wake up and say, ah, it's true, it's true, I'm a child of God. Do you know what she did? I've seen things in my life.

She joined hands with the unbeliever to attack me. She said, excuse me, I don't like you to interfere with my private affair. So the young man attacked me also and said, that's how some of you say you are carrying the Bible up and down to confuse people.

So that day, I carried my Bible and I left. They did not escort me. They did not say bye-bye.

When the young man left, I came back again. I called her by her name. I said, my sister, are you sure you are going in the right direction? She said, whether it's in the right direction or it's in the wrong direction is none of your business.

I have decided what I'm going to do and I'm going on. The day she packed and she was going to follow that man, I still stood there and she drove in front of me as if to say, I know whether you like it or not, I'm going. And I stood there and said, Lord Jesus, can't you stop this girl? Can't you stop this sister? You

listen and say, we can't stop her because she had made up her mind to go that way.

I would bring her back but she would have suffered enough. So she left and I'm standing there praying. I think they married not up to two years when the marriage started to give problem.

And she sent a note, Ragbule, please be praying for me because he called the man's name and said the man is proving difficult. I wrote back and said, you have only started to know the difficulty of the man. Get ready to endure it.

He said, please be praying for me. I said, no, you know you don't need prayers. The matter became so hard that the man became physical and beat her seriously with wounds on her face.

He said, see what he has done to me. You love him, isn't it? You told me you loved him and that we should not be interfering with people's matter and you know God has not called us to interfere in people's marriage. So please continue your marriage.

It was very hard. I think she was in this matter for several years. So one day I went to where they are settled.

I didn't know she was in the congregation. I was just preaching my message. And I was talking about how not to miss the Lord.

When somebody in the congregation just stood up and said, stop it, stop it. I have a story to tell. And she ran out with tears and stood before a whole congregation and said, Brethren, what this man is saying, I want you to listen.

Eleven years ago, I missed my opportunity. I have suffered ever since. I don't know whether God will forgive me again.

But I have suffered. She broke down. She wept.

Many other people came out to repent that day. And as she was crying with agony, the Spirit of God said, now, I will restore her husband but the scar of disobedience, there's nothing we can do about that. After a few more years, I had gone somewhere to preach and lo and behold, one man just walked out to give his life to Christ.

And I was wondering who this man was. It was the man. But years of sorrow.

I want to ask you tonight, Brethren, don't just sing these good songs while you keep him outside. Don't just be religious. There's no reason why you cannot have revival.

There's no reason why God cannot restore you tonight. And there's no reason why the power of God cannot restore your life. As you join me in prayer tonight, do you know that I'm not just calling those who have not ever even opened to the Lord once.

Maybe you did. But your fire is finished. The Spirit of God kept nudging you, kept drawing you, kept pulling you and saying, my daughter, you have left your first love.

You have moved, but you have not moved. This night, don't let us finish this meeting as it may be tomorrow. If Jesus is putting his hand on the hole of the lock, open for him.

Don't lock him outside. Jesus may be putting his hand on the hole of your business because that business came between you and him. It might be something that you started, an ambition, something said, we must get this.

And that has robbed Jesus of his prime of place in your life. And he's putting his hand there and saying, my brother, open for me. Can you do that tonight? Don't just go and say, oh, this is a good meeting.

It's not good enough until you have acted. It's not good enough until you have said, now Lord, what else? I have undressed, that's okay. Come in, just as I am.

Even if I must defile my feet, you can wash me, wash me in the blood of the Lamb. Don't go from this meeting without opening to the Lord. Is there somebody sitting here? You have entered into a strange relationship.

That relationship, you are so afraid of letting the pastors know about it because you know they may not approve it. If ordinary brothers like ourselves would not approve it, what of God who dwells in your heart? How long will you keep him outside? Tonight, you know I'm just a visitor, I'm a stranger, I've just come. But the Spirit of God is asking me to say to you, how long will you keep him outside? How long will you argue with God over a matter of obedience? There's an issue of obedience that God is saying, obey me and you will have peace.

But you keep saying, no, not now, not now, not now, not now, not now. When will it be? Is it when he has walked away and then you'll be exposed unto the watchman of the road? Is it when he has walked away that the daughters of Jerusalem will remove your veil and spite you and wound you and damage you? Will you only be looking for him after many, many damage has happened to your life and to your family? This night, I want to suggest to you, there is not one single reason why you shouldn't allow him in tonight. And perhaps, you have heard the gospel for years, you have followed people to meetings, but when it comes to making decisions for the Lord, you keep saying, not now.

You keep saying, I'm not sure. You keep saying, I don't want to do it now. I don't want to do it now.

I don't want to do it now. When do you want to do it? When everything is point? When your veil has been torn apart? When wounds of the enemy are rested on your life? When scars have damaged your shape? Is that when you would like to do it? Do you know the Bible says, it is good that a man will bear the yoke in his youth? Do you know that it is a great privilege that God is reaching out to you in the prime of your years before things are point? Tonight, why would you say no to him who is yearning for you? Why would you say, not yet, when Jesus is saying, I can come in now? You are intelligent enough to say yes to the Lord. Why not say yes to him? As we pray together, I would like you to please permit me to be a little strange.

And what is the strange thing is that I want you to be on your own with God. I want you to forget everybody around. I want you to speak to God as if no one else is in this meeting.

I want you to tell him, Lord, I have kept you waiting for too long. Take over. Take my life.

Take my life. Come in. I will not keep you outside again.

As we pray, and if you sense that tonight, why don't I just stand where I am and open to him? Open my life afresh. Open everything to God. Don't hide anything anymore.

Won't you do that? This altar will be available for you just to do whatever you sense to do with God tonight. Either to stand out there and to walk before God and just kneel before him. Or just to say, Lord, do not pass me by.

Don't go from me. I have been struggling with dryness for too long. Let it end in this meeting tonight.

Thank you very much. Would you like to stand up as we pray together?

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