

God Gives Blessing to Produce Fruit

by George Warnock

God's ultimate intention for his people is to know the depths of God and experience the fullness of God's intention, which is only possible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the pursuit of love.

Duration: 1:19:59

Scripture: Exodus 33:19, Deuteronomy 32:1, Ephesians 3:8, Colossians 1:26, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Fruitfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of God's work in producing spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. He compares the rain that waters plants and produces beautiful fruit to the work of God in the lives of His people. The speaker also highlights the mystery of the gospel that was revealed to Paul and emphasizes the need to make all men see and understand the true message of the gospel. He criticizes the use of dramatic performances and shows in churches to convey the gospel, emphasizing the power of the living word of God. The speaker concludes by urging believers not to let the blessings and ministry God gives them become their ultimate vision, but to remain humble and reliant on God's strength.

Transcript

I want to pursue a little this matter of our vision and our expectation, our intention for doing what we're doing, our intention for gathering together, God's intention in the body of Christ. And God wants us to see the ultimate that he has intended for his people, for his church. Otherwise, where there's no vision, the people perish.

And whether that refers to being lost or there's a perishing of God's purposes in us, there's no real vision. And so God wants us to see what he has in mind, and that what he does along the way is never to be considered in any sense an ultimate. But we're prone to make ultimates of experiences.

We used to do it in the church, you get saved, and then days of Wesley, and after that, and I'm not denying the fact that God did do another work in people, and he called it sanctification. And then Pentecost comes along, and no, there's still the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And so now we've got the full gospel, it's saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost, and you've got the whole thing.

And God wants us always to know there's much, much more. No matter how far we go, there's still much more. And when we pass into the great beyond, there's still much more.

Heaven isn't going to be a boring place. It's not going to be boring. Oh, I saw that yesterday, I saw that.

If God is God, there will be an eternal unfolding of his heart to his people. I have not seen nor ear heard, neither have I entered into the hearts of men the things that God has prepared for those that love him. But unto us God hath revealed them by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things. Why is God's Spirit given to us? Well, going up in Pentecost to give you power. Well, that's one aspect of it.

But you go through the Scriptures and you find that we're so inclined to say, this is what it's for, and then leave it at that. Instead of recognizing that anything that has life is unfolding, has growth, never stagnant if it has life. And the life of God is not stagnant.

It's a continual growth. And it begins here. That's the thing we want to emphasize.

It begins here, and God wants to continue it here, not just get a few experiences and then, okay, I'm ready for heaven, Lord. And then when you get older, Lord, please take me, Lord, please take me. And I realize perhaps the burden of old age has been heavy on many.

You'd sooner go than stay. But I believe in God's ideal. You don't retire.

Your work is done. And I know it doesn't happen that way very often, but you don't have to die of disease or shouldn't. But we're not blaming anybody.

We just recognize that the church is not in that place where God wants it to be. Moses lived to be 120 years. And that was under the law.

He was the minister of the law. Well, we're under grace that's far greater than what Moses had. And Paul says that.

But then you talk about some of the things that Moses saw and experienced, some of the things that John of Israel experienced. If we had one-tenth of it, you say, why are we spiritual? For instance, the cloud of glory that hung over the camp of Israel every day and night for 40 years. And there was a camp up in Ontario, Canada, where I heard in the days of great revival at the beginning of this century, that light of God would hover over this tent.

People coming from a distance would see it and come to it. I forget the name of it. And I heard about that.

Well, how tremendous. That happened over the tent of Israel for 40 years. Every day.

It became so common it was no longer a miracle. It happens every day. You don't consider it a miracle.

I mean, the very sun rising and setting is a miracle, but well, it's happened that way all our life, so it's no miracle. In the hearts of God's people, it becomes so hard. We get so accustomed to God's gracious benefits that it's no longer wonderful, no longer a cause for thanksgiving.

It's there. It's always there. And so the constant burden of God's heart is to lead his people on.

How far? As far as God will take you. But you say God only wants to take us here. Now, be careful you don't go too far.

God doesn't lay out restrictions like, don't go too far here. He's always inviting us to come further. But you say I might get swamped.

Well, that's what he wants, if you use an illustration. When he invited Ezekiel to measure a thousand cubits and took him through the waters, and the waters were to his ankles. He invited him to come another thousand and the waters were to the knees.

Come further. And the waters were to the loins. Come further.

But you know, it gets scary. You go too deep and you've got all kinds of people warning you, don't get deep. I remember a letter we got up when I was helping up in the school there many years ago, the time of the revival.

Oh, I like some of these writings, except they go off to deep ends sometimes, but I enjoy the writings. I remember writing back and I told him the story about Ezekiel's vision. And he went on a thousand, and the water kept getting deeper and deeper.

And then I says he went another thousand cubits and walked off the deep end. And he did. He got in waters to swim in.

And that's what God wants. But we want to have a little bit of solid footing, you know. You just don't feel comfortable.

You can touch the bottom. I remember once before, I can't swim very well, but when we moved to the coast, I read a book on how to swim, so I'd go down and I'd paddle around until I knew how to float, and then I lost fear. But boy, I remember one time the tide was coming in, and I could hardly touch bottom when I was going back to shore there.

It's a little scary if you can't touch bottom. God wants us to come to a place where we can't touch bottom. And don't be afraid if it's in the river of life.

Oh yes, if it's in some muddy stream that man has concocted, or some muddy cistern. Yeah, that's dangerous. But God wants us to flow in his river where we lose control.

We lose control. Oh, that's scary, I know. But where the Spirit of God is in control, then that's not scary.

Because he's the one who brought order out of chaos. He moved upon the face of the great deep in the beginning, and through the Spirit of God all things are held in their orbits. And we marvel at it, how universes and galaxies and planets and stars are all up there, and billions and billions of them, and yet somehow this little planet, this little speck of dust in which we live, it survives it all.

You read of scary things sometimes, that what might happen if one of these big asteroids hits us, and what it could do could wipe out life on the planet, and that's so. It won't happen as long as God's in control, unless that has something to do with the burning up of the elements of this old earth that God might bring forth a new one. God wants to be in control.

And when we say that, it's not an autocratic thing that we should think of, like we think of when we're under control. But we should think rather of being under the control of him, who is total life, total love, total light, total truth, the author of all peace and harmony. How wonderful to be under that kind of control.

I remember once reading in a version that had marginal reference in it, and I came across this scripture here in Mark 1 where there was a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit, and he cried out saying, let us alone, what are we to do with thee? And there was a note there, that word with, and it said, the Greek said in. And then the note said, he didn't just have his unclean spirit, he was in it. And he said in the note, that means he was dominated by it, he was under the control of it, he was in it.

And I don't know if that thought remained with me concerning what I was to discover later, that the same word is used for those who are in the Spirit, in Christ. Not just that they have the Spirit, but we're in the Spirit. And if that's true of that evil spirit, and people recognize how awful it would be to be under the control of an evil spirit, how beautiful to think that God wants to take away that evil spirit of control and cause us to live in another spirit, the Spirit of Christ, where he's in control.

And yet it still seems abhorrent in the minds of most Christians. I must always have control of myself. God wants to be in control.

Not in an autocratic sort of way, but in the Spirit of life. How healthy we would be if the law of the Spirit of life and Christ Jesus had control of these mortal bodies. And I believe God wants to do that.

I believe he will yet do it before immortality. I'm not talking about immortality. God leaves us in a body of mortality that we might be able to suffer with Christ.

But our Lord Jesus Christ did not die of any cancer or tuberculosis or some kind of disease that fastened itself upon him. Though he took that to become our salvation and our healer, but he lived in a mortal body. But nevertheless, a body that was healthy and strong.

And the only time he became weak was when for our redemption. He who was the great and mighty one became weak for our sake. This just comes in passing here, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, God's full intention in giving us the Spirit is that it might become a law within us, not just something we have to possess to use, to administer by it, to do things for God by his Spirit.

He didn't just give us his Spirit as something for you and I to control, as often seems to be the case, especially in ministry, where God has given certain authority and the thought seems to come, I'm in control here because God has made me to be apostle or prophet or whatever. But rather, the Spirit of God wants to be in control. And that no matter how great that ministry is, God wants that minister to be under the control of that Spirit.

I believe that's what God means, where Jesus said, Abide in me and I in you. We read that, memorize it, very simple, Abide in me and I in you. Begin to contemplate that.

I hardly touched yet. We know what it is for Christ to be in us, do we not? Christ in you, the hope of glory. Do we know? Can anyone here say they know in some great experience what it means for us to be in him in an experiential way? You say, What's the difference? There must be a difference.

Jesus says, I want to abide in you, but I want you to abide in me. It's a simple illustration, of course. This person goes down to the river and fills up his glass with water, and he's got river water in his glass.

But then he, and I won't And we make much of immersion in water, because I believe the word baptism implies that. Immerse in water. How much emphasis do we place upon this matter of being baptized, immersed in the river of God, immersed and living there? There are heights and depths in God that we

haven't touched yet that God wants us to touch, to experience in this life.

I have not seen, nor hath ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for those that love him, but unto us God hath revealed them by his Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth, searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. And I believe, Brethren can confirm it, that we use the word deep things as a translation of a word that, it's one word, the all things.

I don't know Greek very well. And I believe that word says, not in deep things, as if we've got to know these deep things of God, but the depths of God. Look it up.

We might know the depths of God. Give me a new thought. The depths of God.

And we're born for the depths of God. And I'm not talking about deep mysteries of the scriptures or theology, but the depths of God, the deep things of God, the depths of God that God wants to bring us into. And how Paul prayed for the Ephesian church that they might, like the book of Ephesians, where Paul would begin to utter these unsearchable things, and yet using the Greek language to portray it, to say it, and yet knowing that there is a language beyond any Greek or Hebrew or Spanish or English or German that man cannot speak.

Maybe in the Spirit, maybe in tongues sometimes we speak some of that. We call it the unknown language. The things that God is so far beyond us that they're unsearchable.

And the heart of God, how is he going to reveal himself to us in my English language or your Spanish or your German or your Hebrew? How is he going to talk to you in the language of heaven? Use your language, but your language with 25 letters, 26 letters, how can God reveal himself in that? There's another language that if we do not have, we cannot comprehend the things of God. And that's the language that God bridges by his Spirit. And so that's what Paul meant when he said, What things knoweth the things of man but the Spirit of man? What do you know about mankind if you're not a man? Very little does an animal know about any human being.

Yet sometimes we say they're very intelligent, just somehow they can relate a little. But who knows what's in man except by the Spirit of man? Then he says, Then who knows what's in God but by the Spirit of God? That's why how vain it is to think that by intellectually we can figure out the heart of God, because only the Spirit of God knows that. So Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, maybe we'll just turn to it a minute, 1 Corinthians 2, Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

He gives us the Spirit, not just to make us happy or jump or dance or preach or minister or, oh, you could go on and on. He gives us the Spirit of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. He wants us to know what he's freely made available to us.

He's already told us that eye hasn't seen it, ear hasn't heard what God's revealed, what he's prepared for us. But he says, God is revealed amongst us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things, the very depths of God himself.

God gives us, we're humans of the dust, nevertheless capable of receiving his Spirit because we're made in his image. He gives us that Spirit, and that Spirit might search out those things in God. And so here's Saul of Tarsus, knowing Greek and Hebrew to perfection and never really knew God, because he didn't have the Spirit.

I studied Greek a little in time, and I wasn't able to pursue it. I often regretted it, and I still regret it in a sense. But I think God gave me courage to know and to understand that some of the great theologians that knew Greek and Hebrew to perfection yet never really come to know the Lord in great depth.

And that to have the Spirit of God, he can reveal to you these unutterable things in the heart of God that no earthly language can unveil. And yet we're very thankful for our translators, for those who have given us the concordances. Those who know Greek and Hebrew, God has always provided those because he is concerned about maintaining the integrity of the written word of God.

But let us never be disturbed if somehow, sometime the Bibles are all taken up and confiscated and destroyed. The living word, the true word, still remains. They're in steadfastness.

And God could raise up someone to stand before the people and declare it if there's no Bibles. I know a man who would do that. A man who had the gift, you might say, of the Bible.

Not that he could quote Genesis 1 right on through. He didn't read the Bible much. But when he stood to minister, he'd quote scriptures.

That's about all he would preach for a half an hour, three-quarters of an hour. And he'd say, take your Bibles, and he'd be standing there without a Bible. He shall know that I am the Lord, comma, when I have opened your graves, comma, O my people, comma, semicolon, colon, just like that.

I mean, accurately, a gift that God had given him. He wasn't walking with God. I'm going to, Lord willing, come back to some of that.

I want to talk about going on to know God and not to stop short in any benefit he has given us, any blessing he has given. Never to think, I've got this blessing, I've got one, two, three, I've got the third blessing, and so finally I've got it. Because a blessing from God is not the fullness of God's intention.

It's what that blessing will do. Let's take note in the scriptures when God says he's done this in order to do that. Pay attention to it.

Because God does this with it, well, that's great. And it is great. It might be tremendous, but in order that something else might happen, we'd better see what God has in mind that might happen.

So when he says, I've poured out my gifts upon the church, and I've raised up, I've given to the church gifts from my own heart. When he ascended on high, he led captivity captives and gave gifts unto men, apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers. Isn't that great? God's restored the apostolic, the fivefold ministry, and that has become the theme of the church in this last half century, almost 40, 50 years.

And God did emphasize it, because he did that. He restored gifts to his people. And when God restores anything to his people, for a season he'll emphasize it greatly.

But he doesn't want us to stop there. So God's intention in giving the gifts of the spirit, precious as they are, his intention is something else. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till.

Till. Well then, if it's till something, when that comes, well then these others somehow have got to be put in the background. So it hasn't come yet, so we shall thank the Lord that he's given us gifts and blessings

and ministrations, and we anticipate he'll do much more in the days to come, because there's been a perversion of many of the gifts that God has given, there's been misuse of them, people have become disillusioned because of much that's gone on.

Not that it comes from the gifts of God, but it comes by reason of the fact that those who have these gifts have not realized God's intention in giving them, and feel they're in control, rather than recognizing when God makes an apostle or prophet, he wants that apostle, that prophet to come under the control of the Spirit of God, and his ministry is going to be valid. And not denying that if he doesn't come under that control, that man might still have power. He may still have power without coming under the control of the Holy Spirit.

But it'll be to his own loss. It might benefit the people of God, but it will not benefit the one who is manifesting that particular gift or ministry. It's necessary that we understand these things, because God's people have become so disillusioned in seeing mighty men of God, so-called.

God says, don't call any man mighty. But we see these mighty men of God, and they become heroes, and men become totally captivated by the great things they do. And God's people have been disillusioned when after a season somehow, they fail, something happens, they get so disillusioned, many of them quit church, they don't want to go anywhere, they don't want to hear any more preaching, because they do not understand that you can have all the gifts of the Spirit, you can have all power, all wisdom, all knowledge, prophetic utterances, and if you don't have love, it profits nothing.

Paul said that. We say, yeah, I know, but we don't pay much attention to that. We think, well, a man couldn't have all that and not have love.

But he can. And so, if we know that God's ultimate intention for his people is to come unto love, then that's what we'll pursue. And Paul says, desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but follow after love.

You don't follow after spiritual gifts, you follow after love. So let's continue a little, this message here in Ephesians 4, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry. So then the ministry is given to minister Christ to the people, that the body might be edified, that they might impart to the people of God something to enable them to be ministering servants in the house of God, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry.

So what we call fivefold is, in their ministration, to impart something to God's people that they might be ministers. And I'm not talking about anything clerical, anything to do with the clergy. The intention of ministry is to produce ministry in the body of Christ, so everyone in the body has a ministry.

Everyone is called to ministry in the body of Christ. You can't make it happen. But that's the intention of ministry.

And I say this, it's the ministry that God has sent for the edifying of the saints, for the work of ministry, and for the building up of the body of Christ. If it doesn't build up the body that every member has a vital function in that body, that ministry has failed. And I don't see much desire, as I hear and read of these big prophetic apostolic conferences, where thousands come to it to listen and to go away admiring the great teachings they got, the great apostles that spoke, the great prophets that ministered.

No thought, it seems to me, in those great ministers of solely imparting something to God's people, that they become ministers in the body of Christ. I'm not saying that's universal, but that's the sense you get,

that as long as you uphold this fivefold ministry, everything is lovely and that's magnified. And it's till this work has been accomplished in the body, and then the schism will disappear in the body of Christ.

I discovered that recently. God has tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to those parts which lack, that there be no schism in the body of Christ. How? We'll read 1 Corinthians 12.

I cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more of those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. God looks down and he sees you when you say, well, I love coming to church, I love fellowship with God's people.

I don't have anything, of course, but I love God's people. I like to hear the word that you recognize you're feeble. That's a good attitude to have.

But God is not pleased until he has put such honor upon you that you become something that the rest of the body cherishes as being vitally essential in the body, instead of thinking, well, poor guy, nice guy and all that, but he doesn't have any great value. It might be so because of his neglect, but it might be so also because there hasn't been the ministration of the truth of God in power to these people to impart to them something that that feeble person needs. God's intention is to take those feeble members of the body and to put more abundant honor upon them, because those members of the body, that's verse 23, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely parts have no need, but God has tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacks, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members might have the same care one for another. So you see the system we have, the care is on the pastor. If it goes and goes from 1,000 to 2,000, well, you've got to build a temple to seat the 2,000.

You'll go that, build one to seat 3,000. I don't know what you'll do if the whole city is converted to the Lord, and that's nothing to do with expansion in the body of Christ, nothing to do with enlargement in the body of Christ. We met a man from India a year ago, Pastor Joseph, he calls himself, from Bombay, India.

Struggled away there for a year with a small group of people like any normal pastor, very concerned and interested in his people, and yet somehow, always with so many troubles and problems, he sought God in prayer and fasting, and God said, Don't try to build up this church, but establish home churches. Let the people gather a few in a home, and then when that home is filled, go to another home. I don't know when he started that, a few years ago.

Last year when he told us this, he said, Today there are thousands of churches in Bombay, 15 people, 20 people, that's about it. They won't go to the Christian temples, because they've got their own temples, Hindu temples, Sikh temples, they've got all that. But the person living in this little humble cottage, a neighbor will go over and say, Come and visit us tonight, we're going to have a gathering.

And they get converted. And the first thing you know, that house is filled up. And there's an elder in charge, and an elder might be in charge, when I say in charge, I mean hopefully under the Holy Spirit.

Maybe two or three under him, and then there's another home, and another home. And a year ago, he said there was a thousand house churches, and he might go away two months and come back, and there's 25, 30 more house churches. And I'm not saying that's to be the explicit pattern.

I'm just saying that it's God's way to divide, in order that there might be true unity, and that the schism might be eradicated. To divide in segments, that there might be administration of the body, by God putting honor on all these members that sit there and say there's nothing to do. Oh, we'll make you a choir leader.

Oh, you can be the youth leader, you can be the leader of the seniors, and creating ministries in order to keep a Babylon functioning smoothly. You want to keep all under control. The real reason for this, the megachurch system, is really to keep control.

And you know that, and they know it. It's to keep control, because if it gets too scattered, we can't control it, they don't want to flow in the river. But this river of life is not dangerous.

He will cause you to flow in his purposes. Thomas says it's full of water. What does man do then? How come we end up in the state we're in? God said through Jeremiah, my people have committed two evils.

They have forsaken me the fountain of living water. And they have hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Now, I thought of those two evils.

Which is the worst? To forsake him the fountain of living water, but if you recognize it, hurry back to the river. But no, we don't have the river, we don't have what we had in Azusa Street, we don't have what we had in the Great Awakening, or the Wesleyan Revival, we don't have that. But we want to retain some of the flavor of it.

So when Wesley's dad, they organized the Wesleyan church, when he's dead and gone, instead of seeking God for a new river if the streams are drying up, not a new river but the opening of the one that they channeled off into human cisterns. Which is worse? To forsake the fountain, or having forsaken the fountain to dig cisterns, holes in the ground to pour that pure water in, in order to keep it pure. Because we're always afraid of heresies and false doctrines.

So if you have this little pool here, we can't control the river, but we can control that and keep it clean. And you know what happens when you pour water into a cistern to keep it clean. It doesn't stay clean.

It might stay clean for a month, a couple of months. And they think they've succeeded. God is pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh.

And the churches in this day and hour are excited about filling their cisterns with charismatic water. Excited about it. And there's a freshness about it for a season.

And they call it a move of the Spirit that began, when was it? In the 19th, whatever. And really it began as a river. Boy, that.

But what began back whenever it was, and what became known as the charismatics, was the channeling of this wonderful flow into their cisterns. Because they discovered it still works there. They can still talk in tongues.

They can still heal. They can still prophesy. They can still preach.

They can bring in the people. People are still blessed. And we're not denying any of that.

But it's not God's order, and it won't last. Because God's intention is not blessing, but the fruit of this blessing. And so back to Ephesians 4, where the perfecting of the saints.

And so there's a standard somewhere in Canada, no doubt here in the States, where this is the standard. And anything that's made in feet and inches has to be according to that standard. It's set.

It's fixed. So anybody who manufactures tools or tape measures, it's got to be right on. Now let me tell you what the standard is when God says he wants to bring his people to perfection.

And to the measure of the stature of the fullness I know it's too high, but it's something God's doing, not you and I. I wish somehow we could emphasize that. It's just as much a work of God as when God soothed down and molded together a bunch of clay or whatever and formed a man. And you know very well that if any other creature was around and says, there, that's the man that God's made.

Stand up, Adam. You know it couldn't happen. But you don't have any trouble believing that God did that and then breathed into him the breath of life and became a living soul.

And so, oh, God did it. Well, don't think for one moment that what we're talking about is something that you and I are supposed to do or that the Bible ministry is supposed to do. It's God who breathes in this life to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, not the nine.

God's people, I don't care if it's the humblest saint in the body of Christ, comes over to minister to one of God's needy ones. He can, as it were, by the Spirit, breathe that life into them, not of his own volition, but if God the Spirit is in him, God will enable that to happen. So we're not saying, well, oh, it's not possible.

It can't happen. You know very well nobody can be perfect in this life. I know that.

I'm talking about God the Creator, who, when you look at that human body of yours and you say, isn't it tremendous? You're amazed at the functioning of the human body. A famous doctor wrote a book on it and likened it to the body of Christ. I mean, you can't conceive of the wonderful unity and harmony and the ability to ward off disease and fight disease.

I mean, David said, I was made in secrets in the lowest parts of the earth. I know when he said that he was speaking prophetically of our Lord Jesus and the body that he was forming for Jesus and ultimately for this body of Christ. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect.

And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. And David, I know, was speaking concerning the Christ and the body of Christ. It's something that God formed that we don't understand how he did it.

We understand it concerning this human body. We don't understand it, but we believe it. How much more cannot the God who is the God of the spirits of all flesh at the appointed time stoop down and breathe into the body of Christ his own life, that they might rise up in the beauty of the stature of Christ? It's going to happen.

I don't know how quickly it can happen, very quickly. Ezekiel saw it. God called him out to the boneyard, the valley of dry bones, and they were dry, and lo, they were very dry.

I was thinking of my mother, come back from a meeting, and what was, oh, lo, it was very dry. And God says, can these bones live? I mean, imagine Ezekiel standing in a boneyard and saying to Ezekiel, Ezekiel, do you think these bones can live? What would you say? What he said, oh, Lord, I don't know, prophesy to them. I'm telling you, God is going to put a spirit of prophecy in his people.

Thank the Lord for prophets he puts in the church. He's going to put a spirit of prophecy in the people of God, where when they gather together in his name and Jesus is Lord and the Spirit is in control, there's going to be a witness of Jesus, which God says is the spirit of prophecy. The spirit of prophecy went forth.

And as he prophesied, behold, there was a noise, a shaking. I remember one time, because God emphasized that prophecy of Ezekiel very much back in 48, 49, and with such emphasis that it somehow just sticks in everyone's heart that heard it, about the valley of dry bones. And years later, when it seemed to all peter out, which bothered me tremendously for a season, only for a season until I saw something else, which if we get time, we'll touch on it.

But God emphasized that so is the church of Jesus Christ, like these dry bones, scattered about in the valley. How about that spirit of prophecy going forth? There's going to be a shaking and a moving and a movement together and so forth. And I remember years later, I thought, well, what did happen there? And I remember that prophecy, and I wrote down in my Bible somewhere, behold, there was a shaking.

And I think I wrote, and bone came to bone a few years later as I saw that indeed God was drawing people together. And I stopped there. I don't know if I'll live to finish it up or not, but someday the next part of that prophecy is going to be fulfilled.

There was no life in me. And then he said to Ezekiel, stop prophesying to the bones now. Prophecy to the winds.

And so he prophesied to the winds. The time has come when God wants a ministration unto him. To people, yes, but they will only be truly impressed upon by God's Spirit as it's to God first and he hears it first.

You see, I want to tell the people, God knows all about these things. Heaven knows all about it. God knows about it, but I don't know if all the angels there know about it or if all the angelic hosts know about it who are there to minister on behalf of the church because they're seeking to learn from you and I. Don't get too excited if an angel tells you something.

I might believe it and I might not. Depends what you tell me he told you. When they start teaching you things from God's Word, I'd be very wary because they're ministering servants to help you and I. God hasn't set them as teachers in the church.

They might be around here listening in to see what they can learn. You're getting a little arrogant now? Not a bit. Peter says, angels desire to look into these things that we're talking about.

And they're peering, looking, wondering what's going on, because they don't understand too much about our glorious redemption. They're not the objects of redemption. Somehow God is using the church of the living God to reveal his wisdom in heavenly places.

I'm just interested in this earth. Well, God's not. He's interested in this earth.

Of course he is, but he's not concerned about you and I just being earthbound. He wants us to begin to hear what the heavens are saying and to respond to what the heavens are saying and to hear what we're saying. If we're moving in the Spirit, the heavens will hear what we're saying and the heavens will be alerted to war and good warfare on behalf of the church if they hear what the church is saying.

Imagine Moses standing there before the congregation and saying, hear, O heavens, and I will speak. Oh, shut up, Moses. We're the ones listening to you.

No. Heavens must hear what God's people are saying, because we're depending on the forces of heaven in this warfare that we're engaged in. Spiritual weapons.

They're standing there in the heavens. They're ready to be marshaled at God's command and they're listening to what the church is saying. I mean the church that's walking in the Spirit.

Hear, O heavens, and I will speak. Give ear, O earth, to the words of my mouth, Moses said. Paul tells us that God gave him administration of the gospel to the intent that he might declare among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

You say, that's what I want to do. Nothing else. No.

If you stop there, you don't have the full gospel. To declare unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. We can't go into that in detail, but that's what has been going on.

People declaring these unsearchable riches that are in Christ Jesus. To declare these unsearchable riches of Christ and to cause all men to see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God. Let me find that in Ephesians chapter 2 or 3. Paul said God gave him the revelation of the gospel as a mystery, a secret that God revealed to him.

That he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see. Aren't we trying to make men see? Because if they don't see, they don't hear, they don't know what the gospel is about. So what do we have? I don't like to always come back to this, but it's so ridiculous.

People going around and dramas and puppet shows and mime and pantomime to show people the gospel. This is what the gospel is. We're acting it out.

Clowns there with their painted faces all white and going through all sorts of motions to show forth the gospel. Men might see. I think those things are happening in what's called the church of Jesus Christ.

But Paul had a ministration of a living word that when he spoke the gospel, the same thing happened that when God said, Let there be light. And in that creative word that Paul sent forth, it caused men to see. And so if that creative word doesn't go forth to cause men to see, they remain in their bondage.

They remain in their blindness. They can't see unless there is power in the ministration of the gospel to open blinded eyes. Because the God of this world has blinded their eyes.

Let the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ just shine unto them. It caused men to see the fellowship of this secret, the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent. So you see, it's not finished.

You don't have the full gospel yet. Preach the unsearchable riches, but in the power of the Holy Spirit and going forth, shining as a bright light, a light that will remove the blindness, the darkness, but take away the veil to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers and heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. But why do I care about those things up there? Here's where the need is.

God knows that. But unless the principalities and powers and heavenly places, unless to them is revealed the mystery of God, they're not going to be shook up. You say, what's the mystery of God? What do they mean to know about the mystery of God? They know, and God wants you and I to know, that the mystery of God is the mystery of the cross.

Paul goes through that in quite some detail in 1 Corinthians 1, that the mystery of God is the mystery of the cross. The Greeks seek after wisdom, and we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God and the cross.

They're at the cross by a man overcoming evil with good, by overcoming darkness with light, by overcoming hatred with love, by overcoming deceitfulness with truthfulness, by overcoming everything that is evil with everything that was good, for he was the sum total of all that is good. Hanging on a cross, he overcame those principalities and powers and heavenly places. And when that which God calls the wisdom of the cross penetrates the heavens, it causes them to be terrified, because they know they were defeated at the cross, not at the resurrection.

At the cross they made an open show of principalities and powers. And so that's why God wants the people to go forth with the full gospel, proclaiming unsearchable riches in the power and in the anointing and in the light of God that removes scales from eyes, and penetrating the heavens, that the heavens might know that the victory of the cross has been accomplished, and they'll be aware of it and be terrified because of it and will surrender because of it. That's why the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.

That's why the weapons are, as old Paul uses the likeness of a sword and a helmet and all that, don't go so much by the likeness that he's using, he takes a Roman soldier as a picture, but he says that helmet is the helmet of salvation. That breastplate is righteousness. That girdle about their loins is truth.

Those shoes that they wear are shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, because the gospel must have a preparation made in the hearts of those who deliver it and in the hearts of those who receive it. Say, just keep to the simple gospel. Well, what is the simple gospel? I don't know what that is, but the gospel of God is the power of God unto salvation, because it's not in our strength, it's in our weakness.

It's not in confronting evil with forces like he's got, that he can muster a great army and a great rally and get them marching in Washington and making a big show of how strong they are. But it's in a weak people, hidden away perhaps on their knees, perhaps lamenting over the lost condition of mankind, that the forces of evil are weakened to the intent that now, under principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God. God wants to restore the full gospel to his people.

He's going to do it when he has the people walking in control and flowing in the river of God. Prophecy to the dry bones, and they came together, no life in them. But there they were in a form.

Then he said, Now prophecy to the wind. And he prophesied to the wind and he said, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. He's going to take the breath of God to do this.

He's going to take that same prophetic utterance that we've rejoiced in when we hear it given to us and send it forth to the people. The prophetic utterance from the heart of God is going to take that same spirit penetrating the heavens, that same prophetic spirit going forth into the heavens, whether it be an intercessory prayer or in a proclamation of the truth of God that causes principalities and powers to tremble from God's weak ones in the earth as the wisdom of God penetrates the heavens, the wisdom of the cross. Don't think these things are strange.

They're only strange because we're not familiar with such things. Paul went forth with the full gospel. The heavens heard it.

They heard it. They knew all about it. This one girl under the power of an evil spirit, she spotted them because those principalities and powers were aware of what Paul was doing and the havoc he was working in their kingdom in the heavens.

And she cried out, These are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto you the way of salvation. Well, that's what Paul was preaching, eh? Why would Satan use the same words? Why would he magnify the Apostle Paul? Satan wouldn't hesitate to magnify the Apostle Paul if he could get a little footing there in his life. And he won't hesitate to magnify the greatest preacher or apostle or prophet or healer on this earth if he can get a little glory out of it.

And he didn't hesitate to try to get an edge in Jesus when he said to him, When Jesus was hungry, take this stone and turn it to bread. You're hungry, aren't you? Aren't you the Son of God? You can do it. He could have done it, couldn't he? But had he done it, he would have been responding to the challenge of the devil instead of following the will of God.

And he didn't do it. God wants us to be subject not to the challenges of the devil, but to the mind of God. Not to show the devil I can do it, how strong we are.

Not for these great men to show the world or the church how powerful they are to do what God says to do his will. I'm going to close shortly, but I want to mention something about this whole thing that we're talking about. It almost sounds that no matter where you go here, you can get into trouble.

And you can, if we don't go all the way within. I don't care how exalted a man might be with gifts and ministries and power. There's still a place that God hasn't fully dealt with him.

There's still a place where Satan might gain a foothold. And we've seen this happen. It's sad to say the church condemns them instead of saying, God, search our hearts.

Because we're looking for more power than we have. We realize we don't have much power and it bothers us because we don't have much power to deal with a lot of situations. God, why don't you give us more power? God is saying I want a people who will not fall.

God was to pour out upon this congregation tonight a great manifestation of power that you and I could go out and perform miracles unheard of. I wonder how many of us would survive it. I mentioned this man that had this gift where he could stand up and quote scripture after scripture after scripture from the authorized version given in verse, where it is found, chapter, book, comma, semicolon, everything else.

And the man was living and mourning. The pastor that brought him in had to tell him not to come anymore. I mean, it's the saddest thing that a man can have tremendous gifts from God, and yet the heart not be

changed.

Many people were blessed because of that. Many people came and found Christ because he was quoting God's words. And under the anointing, you could sense it.

But it took some weeks or months to discover he wasn't living for God. He wouldn't read the Bible. He didn't need to.

He'd stand there and the scriptures would come. I don't like God doing things like that. We don't like the way God pours out his gifts upon the rebellious.

He said he's going to do it. I'm saying this, and that's the substance, really, of what I wanted to come to. The blessing of God is not the fullness of God's intention.

It's intended to bring forth fruit. What became known as Latter-day Saints, the intention was to bring forth fruit. Apostles, prophets, gifts, ministry, yes, but the intention was to bring forth fruit.

And where it did that, there was abiding fruit. Where the hearts were not right, it brought forth kingdom building. The blessing of God did it.

They wouldn't have done it if it wasn't for the blessing of God. I don't understand. Is this Toronto blessing of God or not? Well, God will bless wherever his people are gathered looking for blessing.

He'll bless. They say it's of the devil. I say, no, it's of God.

Some say it's half and half. One man said it's 23 percent of God. Well, I don't know about all that.

I'm just saying that God will bless wherever people need blessing. He's a blessing God, and God's intention is, don't you know, Paul says, that the goodness of God is intended to lead you to repentance. So let's not get amazed about this matter of the blessing.

The rain comes down. Let's read it there in Hebrews 6. For as the rain comes down upon the garden of God, it's going to bless two kinds of seed that are in the ground. There's seed in the ground, and the rain is going to bless both of them.

If the earth which drinketh in the rain, Hebrews 6, that cometh oft upon us, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is not unto cursing, who is entered to be blessed. The same rain that brings forth vegetables, your tomatoes, your trees, your fruit trees, the same rain nurtures your thistles and everything else that's obnoxious in your garden.

The same rain does it. Is it of God? Well, I'm not sure. Let's assume it's all of God.

What's it bringing forth? That's what God's looking for. What's it bringing forth? If the seed is right, it'll bring forth good fruit. If the seed is wrong, it'll produce evil fruit.

The blessing of God will do it. Some of you find it difficult for that, if you understand that. Just before I close, Psalm 78.

I think it's necessary for us to know this. If God's going to pour his blessing again, we sang about it, we need it. We need that rain.

We need it. It was God's heritage. But that rain is going to feed any seeds that are in your life.

There have been many a man who has received great gifts of the Spirit, even in those early days when prophecy came over people and hands were laid upon them and great gifts were given. Many a man, that gift went to ruin, ruination in their lives, because they thought, God, he's going to give me this gift, so I guess he figures I'm all right. And maybe they go on living carelessly and they still could perform miracles.

Well, that proves God thinks I'm all right, doesn't it? It doesn't. We have no indication to believe anything else but that when God sent the 12th voice, Judas went out preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out devils. As far as we know, he did the same as the rest.

And at the Last Supper, when the 12 were gathered around the table and Jesus said, One of you shall be turned in. You think there were 11 eyes suddenly turned in? I think he's the one. Each one said, Lord, me? Lord, is it I? They weren't pointing fingers.

He passed off as a disciple, an apostle of Jesus Christ. But he was a thief. He carried the bag, stealing with the money that was put in.

Looking for enlargement in the kingdom of God, a mercenary. Why did Jesus choose him? You ask the Lord when you get there. I don't know.

He had to be there to fulfill the Scriptures. I'm saying this. He had the same kind of power that the rest had.

But that didn't make him any different. It made him worse. Don't pray for power, except the power that Peter talks about when he says, According as his promises have given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

That's the kind of power God wants you and I to live for. The power that will produce more of his life, his real life, life of purity, holiness, graciousness, bringing forth the gifts of his Spirit. Power to do that.

But let's not pray for any other kind of power until this has wrought its work within us. Pray rather, Lord, don't give us any more power than you give us an equal measure of grace to counterbalance it. Because if we receive a greater measure of power than we have grace and virtue to counterbalance it, it should be to our own ruin.

So before saying all this, after saying, According as his divine power hath given unto us all these things, add to your faith virtue, virtue, knowledge, knowledge, temperance. They say self-control, but let's understand it's not our carnal nature being in control, but the renewed man having control of that new man. And do the temperance, patience.

Did you pray for patience? Well no, we want the greater things, but God wants that patience, because that's part of God's nature. He wants us to have his nature. He wants the fruit.

That's part of God's nature, patience, long-suffering. Lord, make me like you, Jesus. I mean, your power, even your love.

But I'm not sure about this long-suffering and this patience thing. But love, then, is long-suffering. But you can't get away from it.

Yeah, one is love, but add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, the brotherly kindness of love. A brother said to me, and it's a very honest question because it's come to me many times, after the message this morning, this afternoon, Well George, if that's all you really want, that love of God, what's all this other? Why bother with all this other? And I had to reply with a question, an answer, that I think the Lord gave me many years ago when I pondered the same thing, is love all we need? Well, let's just have love, until I think the Lord showed me. It's the ministration of the truth of God to the hearts of his people that causes them to grow into maturity, the maturity of love.

You don't say, let's have it, and here it is. We don't know the, we haven't begun to fathom the power, the beauty, the authority, the life that there is in love. I mean, God's love.

And so that's why we don't evaluate it as we ought. It's the greatest thing in the universe. There's nothing greater.

It's greater than all gifts and all ministries. It's greater than all that. And so if we could just have it, say, okay, forget everything, I'll have that.

It doesn't come that way, because we have to come to know God. And before you know God, you have to walk in his ways. Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

Well, Jesus, just give me the life. No, he says, I'm the way, I'm the truth, and I'm the life. And so you can't, you can't take any shortcuts in this thing.

God leads you in his way before you come to the truth and life. Oh yeah, you get truth from the Bible, I know, but you never really know it in any experiential way until you walk in it. And so if God says, I want to lead you into truth, he leads you into wilderness, the first thing he does when he brings you out of bondage, what he does? He leads them through the wilderness, to learn God's way.

Because they were that wilderness and they didn't know it. They had to come to springs of bitter springs of marrow, because that was them. They had to come through all these hard places to test them, to prove them, to try them, to root out of them all that evil that they might come to Canaan.

No shortcut to Canaan, which is the realm of perfect love. No shortcut there. God didn't take them across the shortcut.

There was one there, but they wouldn't arrive at the heritage God wanted them to have. He led them a roundabout way. God, why do you lead us in such roundabout ways? Because it's not in vain.

The roundabout way is intended of the Lord to discipline us, prove us, try us, test us, that at the end of the way we might have found God. We've come close to the end of the way. Oh God, why didn't you do this quicker? Son, it took me those 75 years to do it, that's why.

But don't be discouraged, young people, because God's going to do a quick work in there. And there's a people coming into Canaan, a few old guys, but mostly younger ones, and little babies are going into Canaan. Because that doesn't mean that's the end of it all.

There's warfare in Canaan. There's lots of trouble there, too. And so they're going on and they're going on, never come to the place, God keep us from ever coming to the place where we feel finally I've arrived.

Because Abraham, though he'd wandered through the land of promise roundabout for 100 years or more, ended up living in the land of promise, I think, for over 100 years, with Isaac and with Jacob. Because God told him to go, so he went. He said, I'm going to show you a land I'm going to give you.

He found the land and he lived in it. But when he found it and lived in it, a sense came to him, this doesn't really satisfy me. There must be something better, something you'll discover in Hebrews 11.

He says, By faith Abraham, when he was called to go to a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed. He went out, not knowing where he went. You want to be like Abraham.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have the faith of Abraham? Then be prepared to go when you don't know where you're going. A young man wrote me a couple of weeks ago, I want you to pray that God will show me his plan for my life. I wrote back and I said, God won't show you his plan for your life.

He might give you a few little indications. Because if God showed you his plan for your life, you'd be working on it. You'd be working on it and you'd have it all figured out and then you'd be so frustrated because it wouldn't work out.

Because God won't show you. He leads you in a way that you never anticipate. But he does give you a little indication along the way and gives you a little bit of a vision.

But no matter what God shows you or tells you, no matter what kind of a ministry God gives you, don't let that become your vision. Don't let the blessing of God become something ultimate. The blessing of God will produce hairs or wheat.

I shouldn't say produce. It'll nurture hairs and wheat. In God's field, Jesus sowed good seed in the field, the garden.

The enemy came and sowed hairs in that field. It received the water from heaven that God sent, and that water from heaven produced those hairs. So the blessing is not a sign of spirituality.

We'd better know that. And don't get troubled about trying to analyze these revivals. Is it of God or not? Let's assume God's blessing the hungry ones in.

Let me read you in closing, like one man said the second closing. Just in closing here. Psalm 78.

I'm not going to read it all. But he declares God's wonderful provision for the children of Israel. And yet, in spite of the fact that God has blessed them over and over and over and over again, they never came to know God.

They tempted God in their will. For all this they tempted himself. Yet he was faithful, pouring out his blessings.

He rained down manna upon them to eat and given them the coin of heaven. That's Psalm 78, verse 24. Man did eat angels' food.

He sent the meat to the foe. Wasn't God doing that? He was blessing them with bread from heaven, with water out of the rock, with healing when they were sick. Not one feeble one amongst them, when that nation walked in obedience to God.

Millions of people. We've inherited all the diseases of Egypt. We haven't got very far yet.

God says, I will not lay upon you the diseases of Egypt. We're not there yet. We're far from it.

God wants to take us on. But in the wilderness he wants to take us on. Say nothing of going into Canaan.

He caused an east wind to blow into heaven. By his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them.

Why did he rain flesh? When he provided in the manna everything they needed. Because they cried out for it. Ask God to check your prayers before you're so insistent.

I insist, God. By faith I claim this. I've got to have this.

If you keep at it, if it's not God's will, he might give it to you. He might answer your prayer. He's done it before.

He answered their prayer and along with answering their prayer, he sent diseases into their midst. It says, sent leanness into their soul. One translation says, he sent evil diseases amongst them.

He gave them their heart's desire and sent evil diseases amongst them. God did it because they wanted him, because they insisted on it. He blessed them in a way he didn't want to bless them because they insisted on it.

I'm not judging what's going on in these different churches, because I've never been to hardly any of them. I'm saying this. I'm prepared to recognize that God is blessing.

So this whole charismatic move or whatever is going on in Toronto, I don't know, I haven't been there. I do hear people are getting saved and healed, so God's blessing, God's meeting me. But I recognize there's a lot of perversion going on in a lot of places.

It depends on the state of the heart. It depends on the kind of seed. If you're insisting, I've got to have this blessing in our church because they've got it somewhere else, so I don't get it in my church.

My pastor friend over there or enemy or whatever will get it. My people will go over there, so we want the blessing here. You're asking for trouble.

God will give it to you if you insist on it. They insisted on flesh because they got tired of the provision that God had intended, the word of God, the living word of God, fresh manna from heaven every day, which when they ate, it kept them healthy and strong and they had the ability to hear what God was saying. That's why he gave it.

I said to you with manna that you might know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live. And that morning God rained down manna upon them and they ate of it. That evening he sent an east wind to blow in the heavens and rain flesh on them.

He rained manna in the morning and that evening he rained flesh as dust and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea and it fell in the midst of their camp and about their habitation so that they did eat and were filled for he gave them their own desire. Another psalm says, and then sent leanness into their souls. But while the meat was dead in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest of

them.

Don't talk about blessing and asking whether it's of God. God's a good God. Ask what does God intend when he blesses me? We're looking for his blessing.

We must have the blessing that God help us right now to have the right seed planted within our hearts. Ask him right now, God help me to be with all these roots that are there. Because if God blesses you with those roots there, God's blessing is going to water those roots of bitterness, lust, pride, arrogance.

The blessing of God will feed those things and magnify it as truly as the rain from heaven will cause those thistles that I had in my garden before it was a garden go six foot tall. It's the same rain that I wanted to have a garden there someday and I looked so hopeless and the time came for me to have a garden. I kept working on it.

Got it pretty well under control. The same rain from heaven watered my thistles as it waters my corn. Same rain.

These are awesome. I keep repeating it because God's people can't understand that. That a man can stand and prophesy and heal the sick or raise the dead.

It has to be of God. Well, maybe that work is of God. It doesn't prove that that vessel is in harmony with God's plan and purpose or with God himself.

And so God sends the rain to produce the fruit and the fruit is that which is akin to his own nature and life. In springtime it's wonderful to see the fruit trees where it's not too far from fruit country and they blossom out and they're beautiful. The rain did that.

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