

God Has a Ministry for You

by George Warnock

The sermon encourages believers to embrace their unique ministry through a deep relationship with God and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:28:37

Scripture: Hebrews 10:4

Topics: "Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power and efficacy of the blood of Jesus in cleansing sinners. He encourages the congregation to think of God and have patience in their distress, as God is working in them to fulfill His promises. The preacher also highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit flowing like a river in the lives of believers, enabling the cleansing power of the blood to have free course. He warns against diminishing the significance of Christ's blood by suggesting that there is no sinless perfection for God's people. The sermon concludes with a call to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit and to be yielded vessels in God's hands.

Transcript

God had a ministry for you, but somehow you can't seem to make it work right, and can't seem to get it fulfilled. You know, there's a place of rest for God's people when they come to the realization that they were born to be God's resting place. And like I was saying earlier, God couldn't find a true resting place in angels and cherubim and seraphim, nor in the heavens and the earth which He had made, nor in all the universe, vast as it is.

Because there was nothing there like Him. But when He brought forth a man in His image, even the Lord Jesus Christ, He found a perfect resting place. He started with Adam, I know.

When the first Adam failed, God knew all about it. But that wasn't the end of God's purpose, which He declared when He said, let us make man in our image after our likeness. It wasn't the finish of God's purpose, and nothing was spoiled.

It rather brought into being the great plan of redemption, and the fullness of which God would have a perfect man in His image. And that man is now seated at God's right hand in the heavens. He didn't remain here on earth, he went to the heavens because his plan was that he should enlarge his body to include you and I. That you and I together with him might be God's dwelling place, God's habitation by the

Spirit.

So that's your destiny, that's your call. May God help us to be satisfied with the destiny that He's set out in the Word for us. To be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

So may the Lord bless your hearts as we gather these days around His Word, anointed by His Spirit. We do believe that His Spirit is here to anoint and to lead and to direct. To bring forth the Word, which is going to be very important.

I know we like to see God working and doing mighty things, and He's going to do that. And He is doing great things. But oh, that God might find a people that are in such union with Him and fellowship with Him that He can boast before the Father, Behold, I, Father, and the children which Thou hast given me are for signs and for wonders in the earth.

Oh, that we might hear His voice these days. May that Word which God has oh, so carefully and diligently prepared for us throughout the pages of this book, may He just break the shell of that Word and bring forth the living truth. Because the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

But you don't discard the letter because it killeth. It's part of God's process to kill that He might bring forth resurrection life. So we honor the Word and we rejoice in the fact that God has given us the very letter of the Word, every letter inspired of God.

And His purpose is in giving us that the same as in putting the seed in the ground, which is the letter, but it must break apart that the life might come forth. And so may God now quicken your hearts and anoint your ears to hear what God would say by His Spirit. Not enough that the minister comes with an anointed Word.

Jesus said, Take heed, are you here? We must come prepared to hear what the Spirit would say to the churches. So let us look to the Lord and pray for our brothers and ministers throughout these days with us and that God would just channel the voice of His Spirit according to His will and that we'd just be sensitive to what He wants to say and just be yielded vessels in His hand. Brother Ralph, just a minute please.

I believe Brother Ralph, I was just thinking a minute ago that God would be very pleased if you could come to these conventions and sit through the conventions without saying a word. I think God would be very pleased with that. Brother Gisele, God bless you.

Through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. We do despise to the blood of Christ if we say that there is no sinless perfection for God's people. We are saying that the blood of bulls and goats was more efficacious than the blood of Christ.

If we're going to say that they sanctified the people in the Old Testament, but the blood of Christ can't make us holy, so how do we need to honor that precious blood? The blood of Jesus that cleanses us from every sin and every stain. Every sin and every stain. I'm not saying I'm in that position, but I'm saying God has that provision for the church of Jesus Christ that His body, when we have entered into the fullness of the cleansing of the blood of Jesus, the body of Christ will be the cleanest thing in God's universe.

There'll be nothing cleaner, nothing cleaner than a people that are washed in the blood of Christ. And it used to, it bothered me, it still does, that we know these things and we see the truth of it, but how is it that

the church of Christ has not been able to enter into the fullness of redemption until, I don't think I saw it real clearly until a year or so ago when I wrote a little writing on the hyssop, that the efficacy of the blood of Christ comes to you and I through the Spirit. And just as in the Old Testament, you may be seated.

In the Old Testament, when they would cleanse a leper, they were to take some living water. One translation is running water. Because water in a pool is stagnant.

If it isn't stagnant, it soon becomes stagnant. You get your denomination, and I'm not ruling out independent denominations, get the denomination that has a pool, nicely fenced, nicely indoctrinated, nice order, nice structure, put living water in it, and that living water will remain living for a short season, but it's going to become stagnant. And you know, you farmers, you make this little dugout, little dam there, and get the fresh water that comes down in the spring, and you've got water for your cattle all summer.

If it doesn't rain for two, three, four years, it'll either dry up or become stagnant. So, God's provision is living water, running water. But the beautiful thing is that they slew this dove over running water, and the blood trickled down into the water, and then they took that water in which was mingled the blood of the dove, and that became the water of cleansing.

And so I've come to understand that the efficacy of the blood is inherent in the Spirit. And the Spirit of God only has precourse in His people as it flows in a river. Not to deny that there is not living water in this little group and that, but it soon becomes stagnant until God's people find themselves in God's purpose, eventually flowing in the mainstream of the river of life.

As a matter of the coming together of the body of Christ has absolutely nothing to do with everybody congregating together in one building in this town or any other town. Nothing to do with the coming together of the body of Christ. Like our brother said, when the ministry, whatever ministry, succeeds in bringing individuals unto union with Him, then we're one as God wants us to be one.

If there's any other kind of unity that man is forming, God is out to destroy it. He's out to destroy it. God has been against Babylon from the beginning, and the purpose of Babylon was to bring unity.

Not division, unity. God's Himself divided. It's not the unity that I have in mind.

And so I see this glorious day when this body that God is forming and brings together by the Spirit and they begin to flow together in the river of God, we're going to partake of the efficacy of the blood of Christ as we have never known it. Because the efficacy of the blood is in the flowing of the Spirit of God. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that blood lose all their guilty stains.

And so be encouraged. Thanks of God, I know that you all come from times of great distress, and that's why you're gathered here. You've known such distress and discouragement.

And we know that. And God knows it. And God says, Yet ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God ye may receive the promise.

He's not withholding the promise from His people. He's rather working in His people to prepare them so that He can come forth and fulfill the promise. And when He fulfills the promise, it will be in a degree and on a plane of glory far beyond anything you ever anticipated.

So may the Lord bless your hearts and seek the Lord these days. As we've gathered just for these two or three days, with spirits and hearts of like mind and like vision and like hope. People haven't flown up here from Arizona just to get some good teaching, or just to, you know, hear some good words.

They've come here out of a hunger for God, and God's going to meet their need. They've come here from California and from Oregon and Washington and Idaho and from the western provinces. And it's just that we've felt God gathers together.

And we believe that God really wants to implant in the hearts of every one of you a living word that will go away with you and that will stand you in good stead in the days to come. And so lay hold upon that word that God puts upon you in your heart. Lay hold upon it.

And don't let it slip away. And don't let the fowls of the heaven come down and pluck it out. And don't despise the word.

I mean God's living word. Don't despise it. Embrace it.

Because it's going to be that living word which when you embrace will bring forth the divine intention that God had in mind when He created that seed. For God has ordained that every seed brings forth after its kind. And that's why we're so desirous that whether it's myself or Brother Cecil or whoever else the Lord might will to bring forth a word it will be that living word that will pierce into the hearts and souls and minds of God's people and penetrate into their innermost being so that whether it happens here or in the days to come there will come forth a living expression of a living Christ for which the world is longing.

I do that occasionally, but in camp meeting time I've never felt to have liberty to do that. And so I'll just fill in here and there some things that the Lord seems to quicken in my heart. And I'm thinking that from early morning on the thought came to me and it sounded a little bit harsh or disrespectful maybe, disrespectful.

But the thought kept coming to me of the elusive God. And God wants His people to seek after Him until they find Him. And He lays that charge before us and He's always encouraged His people to seek Him.

And yet the frustrating part of it all is that as we set our hearts to seek Him He seems to elude us. And we ponder over it, we get so perplexed. We really want God with all our hearts.

We ask God to come and show Himself. And we think we're getting close. And sometimes we think we're right at the door and suddenly He's not there.

And the prophet Isaiah said, Verily thou art a God that hideth thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior. And the prophets were aware of that tendency in God to hide Himself. And Solomon said that as he prayed before the Lord, the Lord said that He would come and dwell in thick darkness.

Imagine the mighty God dwelling in thick darkness where no man could see Him. And these things are somewhat puzzling to us until we begin to comprehend somewhat of the vastness of God and of the nature of God. And we understand a little better.

And even though God has that elusiveness about His being and seems to you and I as one that we cannot locate and cannot find with all our striving, the fact of the matter remains that O God longs to come forth and show Himself to His people. He has an eternal longing in His heart to shine forth. And you say, Ben, why the apparent contradiction? So let us just read this portion here.

Moses, a man of God who set his heart to seek the Lord, and having failed in the commission that God had laid upon his heart to go and deliver Israel, he finds himself in the backside of the desert of Midian where he seemingly wasted the latter half of his life tending a few sheep for his father-in-law in the desert of Midian. And yet we have every reason to believe and know that all during that time his heart was longing after God because the time came when God revealed Himself. And God does not reveal Himself except there is a heart that longs after Him.

And so God gave him a great commission and sent him to do the work that God had in mind. He had called him for it perhaps 40 years before, but now he was sending him. And I always want to point that out to God's people, especially young people who feel the call of God upon your heart.

Don't get too excited about the call of God. If you understand what I mean. I mean, don't think, well, I'm called of God, I better get out there right away and do something.

Because there is sometimes a long time element between the call of God and the sending of God. Sometimes quite a long time. In Moses' case, 40 years.

You say, well, I'm not waiting that long. Well, if you've determined in your heart now, definitely determined that you're not going to wait 40 years, I'd say get out right away. And try your little thing and get it over with.

And I don't believe God is going to keep His people waiting 40 years. There isn't time, I don't think. But I mean that you've got to have that commitment.

You've got to come to that commitment. And so when Moses had come to the end of himself, the end of the way, thinking all the time that he had failed God, he was actually learning God in a new way. Coming to know God as he had never known Him before.

So when he came to that time in his life when he had matured and he'd come to recognize his own inabilities and his own deficiencies and his own weakness, God saw the man that he had been waiting for and the man that he had been preparing all these years. Saw that he was ready and called him. The very sovereign call.

Only this time the call was a commission to go forth. And God knew what Moses would say because God had waited long enough so that Moses had only one thing to say. Not me, Lord.

And that might be a good test you can put yourself to. You feel the call of God very strongly and you're wondering if you're sent or not. Have you by any chance come to the place where you thought, Lord, I love You with all my heart and I'll do Your will, but really I don't think I'm able.

Please don't send me. And that might be somewhat of a thermometer that perhaps you're getting near to that time when you might be ready. So we don't say these things to discourage people who have a vision.

But if you'll bear with us, you'll discover that there's far more to life and far more to ministry than out there doing things for God. And that is to come to know God. And you'll have a far more effective ministry when you come to know God than if you went out now and you learned a lot of things about Him and studied a lot about Him and had your doctrines correct.

And no man who comes to know God can fail to fulfill the ministry that God has given him to fulfill. If you know God, you can't fail to fulfill the ministry that God gave you to fulfill. And in fact, the true ministry that God is going to send forth in this last hour is going to be composed of people who have been prepared to lay down their apostolic office, their prophetic office, their teaching office, their evangelistic office, their pastoral office, any office, elder, deacon.

The true ministry is going to be that people who though, yes, that office has been given unto them by God, they're prepared to lay it down. You say, why would God give it to you and then ask you to lay it down? Well, you don't know the story of the cross if you don't know the answer to that question. It's the principle of the cross that you carry His cross from the time you embrace Him as your Savior until the time you die.

And at that moment's notice, if God says, now, lay down your life, you've got to be prepared to do it. Because as you know, as we all know, we know the Scripture at least, except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. So God doesn't hesitate to ask you to lay down anything.

In the physical realm or in the spiritual realm? Because when God asks to lay down and you walk in obedience, God is not depriving you of anything. He's opening up the way for you and I to enter into a measure of resurrection life such as we could not begin to enter into if we went our own way. But we have to learn yet the beautiful secret of the fact that life comes out of death and the way up is down.

Success comes out of defeat. Power comes out of weakness. And we have to learn that.

And so God draws us unto Himself even though He hides Himself. He hides Himself because who could stand if we said, Lord, we really mean it, come forth in the full blaze of Your glory tonight? We'd have a mass funeral here tomorrow. That's right.

And God knows that. And He knows that we don't understand that. And so it's not that He's denying us the answer to our prayer, but He's seeking to cause us to come to see Him in His greatness.

And having called Moses and having given him this commission, having sent him forth, Moses ran into a lot of difficulty. And Moses was so discouraged and cried unto the Lord. He said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.

And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before Thee and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before Thee. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.

What a letdown to Moses. Oh, how he wanted to see the face of God. God says, I'm going to show you something about Me.

I'll reveal things to you about My goodness and My mercy and My longsuffering and My grace. He says, You can't really look at My face. For there shall no man see Me and live.

And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me and thou shalt stand upon a rock. It shall come to pass while My glory passeth by that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock and will cover thee with Mine hand while I pass by. And I will take away Mine hand and thou shalt see My back parts, but My face shall not be seen.

God says, I'll reveal Myself a little. Get here in this hole in the rock and I'll put My hand over you and I'll go by. And then as I go by, I'll take off My hand and you can have a look and you'll see My back parts.

These things are strange because we know God is Spirit. But in the Old Testament, God would often take on an angelic form just as in the New Testament He took on human form. And He was called the Angel of the Lord.

And oftentimes the terminology of the Angel of the Lord and the Lord are almost interchangeable. Because God put His name there. He somehow wrapped His presence in this angelic form.

So it is really God, but it is in this form. And so that's how no doubt God revealed Himself to Moses. And so God took off His hand.

What kind of a revelation He saw is difficult for us to understand. But let's just put it this way. He saw God after He had gone by.

He saw Him after He had gone by. It seems to me that much of our understanding of God has been just about that. God was here.

You know, there's histories written about how God moved mightily and we read those books. But God's gone by. And so we want to see Him again.

And we were talking this afternoon about the great move of the Spirit 30 or 40 years ago. And well, it's gone by. And it is wonderful.

But you see, it wasn't the fullness. It petered out and it bothered me when it began to peter out. It dried up as far as I was concerned.

It bothered me. Until God began to show me that He dries up the old springs because He's got new ones in mind. If we could only realize that.

You who have been suffering frustration and testing as you've sought to find rest in one fellowship after the other, one church after the other until you get so weary of it. That many give up. But if you could only see that if there's a frustration in that area, take it as a promise from God.

I'm doing that because I've got something better. Take it as a promise. As surely as winter is a promise of spring.

As surely as the dry land is a promise of coming rain. Because God says, I will pour waters upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. And so it's nothing then really too serious to be dry or hungry or thirsty or in the wilderness.

Because God says that's where He's going to pour forth these rivers of life. So don't look upon those things then as calamities, but rather as a promise. So you find yourself in that area.

Oh, well then I've got a promise. I will make a way in the wilderness and bring forth waters in the desert. And so you see, all the time God is seeking to draw us unto Himself.

He wants to reveal Himself. And so He gives these precious promises to sort of draw us, you see. And so the promises are good and we accept that and embrace it.

And just about the time when we feel the promise should be fulfilled, it doesn't seem to happen. And if we don't know God's principles, we'll be blaming God again. Because remember this, in all the promises that God gives in His Word, precious and wonderful as they are, what He's really after is the people who will come into that relationship with Him where they know Him.

That's really what He's after. That's really what He's after. We don't know it at the time because the promise is wonderful and so we embrace that.

And then we just come up to the doorstep of having it in fullness and then it seems to go again. And we mourn over the fact that some terrible thing happened, but God says, no, that was just a little... oh, just something to lure you. A lure.

God says, I will lure My people into the wilderness. He has a way of... I don't like this, but I want you to understand the way in which I say it. I saw this poster once and I sort of shuddered when I read it, but thinking of it and I thought, well, there's a lot of truth in it.

God is a subtle God. Only righteously subtle. And He has something He wants to produce in His people.

He wants a relationship with man that's so vital that God can talk with you face to face and He can suck with you and you with Him and there can be absolute harmony and communion, but you just can't walk into that. And so He'll lure you with promises. So you embrace the promise and sometimes they're fulfilled right on schedule, other times they're delayed for a long time and you wonder what it's all about.

Whereas in the time of the delay, God is adding to the promise. He doesn't tell you about it, but He's increasing it and increasing it and increasing it so that when the time comes to fulfill the promise, well, it's so different from the original. Well, the original, you don't even want it.

So here's your little lad just anxious for that car, that 1957 car that you got there. Dad says, when you grow up, I'll get you one. Oh boy, that's great.

But when you grow up, you're a 1957, 67, 77, you know, you're 1977 and that old 1957 jalopy, well, do you really want it now? Well, that's what Dad promised you, you see. Well, what he meant was when you grow up and you're of age, then I'll give you the kind of an automobile that's fitting to your generation, you see. And so how Israel has been in bondage all these centuries because they want that land over there and they want that city and they want that temple and God gave it to them as a promise, you know.

But what he really had in mind was the city of the living God and the temple not made with hands and the time came and God says, here now, I know I promised you a land and I promised you a heritage and I promised you a temple but now this is what I got. I got a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God that far surpasses any glory of any earthly city and poor Israel in their blindness and the church in her blindness supports Israel in her blindness by putting within their hearts the hope of someday building that temple over there. And the church goes along with it and supports them when God is building a temple of living stones whose glory shall radiate throughout the whole earth and God says, Israel, this is what I've got for you.

And so Abraham saw that when he had gone through the tests and the trials of many years and had walked with God and gone from one altar to another and embraced one promise after the other and finally God says, now everything I've given you which was all wrapped up in Isaac, come up to Mount Moriah and lay it down there. Oh God, but You gave me all these things. Are You going to take them from me again?

No, God has something greater.

And so he took up Isaac and laid it on the altar and Abraham received the highest prize that any man could receive the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And rejoiced to see the day of Christ and sought and was glad and forgot the land of promise for he had found the city of the living God whose builder and maker is God and he became the heir of the whole world, Paul says. Romans 4 became the heir of the world because the seed of Abraham is not really the carnal seed of Abraham.

It's those who've got Abraham's faith. For the promise wasn't given to the natural, it was given to the seed. Singular, Paul says, not plural.

Singular because singular means Christ and those who are in Him. And so did God violate His promise? Did God violate His promise to Israel when He offered them brass and the time came for Him to give them the fulfillment of the promise and then instead of giving them brass, He says, no, I'm going to give you gold. Did God break His promise? And God promised them wood so they looked for wood and the time came and God says, here, I'm going to give you iron.

Did God break His promise? God says, that's what I'm going to do to Israel for brass I'm going to give you gold, for wood I'm going to give you iron. God says, I couldn't explain to you what I really had in mind when I gave you the promise, so I met you on your level and gave you promises that you could understand that this is what I had in mind. So God was really eluding Abraham's grasp.

Not because He wanted to avoid him or break a promise, but because He wanted to draw out Abraham's faith and confidence and hope that God might do better unto him than Abraham ever imagined. You and I are going to discover it to be a tremendous thing in our life and we're prepared to lay down everything that God has given us by way of promise or anything else. Lay it down for Him.

You've got to do it if you want Him. I'm talking about His fullness. You can have Him as a Savior and keep a lot of things for yourself, but if you want Him in the fullness, you've got to lay down everything.

So Paul countered it all up. Countered up all his advantages. An Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the great tribes in Israel.

A Hebrew of the Hebrews, concerning the law, zealous, even went so far as to persecuting the church in Israel. Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Circumcised the eighth day.

A Pharisee of the Pharisees. Named everything he could that would be something to be prized. And then God confronted him with the glory of Christ and He said, I'm prepared to lay it all down for Him.

So he wanted to win Christ. We're talking about winning Christ. Not winning your salvation or earning your salvation.

But coming to that place where you and I see Him face to face. We are joined unto Him and He unto us in that glorious union that God so desires to bring into being in His people in which He is working towards. So we have many examples in the Scripture of this elusiveness of God.

As He draws us unto Himself and coaxes us, you know, and exhorts us to seek Him and then He seems to back out. Think of Jacob. Think of Jacob going along there on his way up to Heron to visit his uncle.

Having to flee from his brother Esau. Camping in the open field at night with his head upon a rock for a pillow. And a vision of God was given unto him where he saw the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon this ladder.

So he's getting close to heaven. And he was in the company of angels. But the God whom he loved and desired was way at the top of the ladder out of reach.

And the vision passed away from him. But there's no doubt in my mind that that vision of God at the top of the ladder remained with him. And after much frustration and much of God's dealings up there in Heron, God put in his heart to return.

And this time on his return, God was going to come down from the ladder and confront Jacob face to face. And so all these dealings that God led Jacob through was really intended to prepare Jacob's heart for that open confrontation with himself. Why didn't he do it at Bethel? Jacob wasn't ready.

He was still a grasping man. He still wanted to get. Lord, if you'll give me this and give me that and prosper me and give me my food and raiment, and I'll give you my tithe.

So he made a bargain. He was still I, you see. I want something.

And that's natural for children. Natural for babes. But as we go into maturity, God requires if we're going to receive the full reward to start giving Him.

You say, I have nothing to give. Well, I know we have nothing to give, but we still prize it very highly. And God wants it from us not because He needs it, but He wants to take it away from us so that we'll catch a vision of the greater riches that He has for us.

People don't understand that. God might ask a wealthy man to give all his goods to the poor or give it to the church, some work. And they think, oh, God needs this money so bad.

And Lord, couldn't You leave me half of it and get some of it from somebody else? It isn't that God needs your money. But He wants you, you see. So I'll take all your money from you and maybe I'll get a chance to get you.

So you see how subtle God is in some of His dealings. But coming back then, He stopped at Bethel. And it became, as you all know, El Bethel because now God was becoming greater in His eyes.

But I think it was before that, wasn't it, that He came to Peniel, the river Jemat, where He sent over the river everything that He had, not knowing for sure whether He'd ever see it again because Esau was on the other side and approaching Him with an army. And so He sent over everything that He had and Jacob was left alone. And here He had spent 20 years accumulating all this wealth and God had succeeded through circumstances.

Circumstances of so bringing Jacob to poverty that God could meet a man alone. And so He sends Esau up with an army to terrify Jacob and causing Jacob to send over everything He had to save his own life. And here he was now alone.

And that's just where God wanted him. Now he could meet Jacob with a head-on confrontation and reveal himself. And the God who Jacob had seen at the top of the ladder was now down right there by his side and wrestling with him, seeking to bring out that final blow in Jacob's life that would cripple him forever and

make him to be an open candidate for a face-to-face confrontation with the Most High.

So that Jacob, after that confrontation, never walked the same again. In fact, as far as the world was concerned, as far as his family was concerned, he was a lame man from then on. A lame man.

He walked on halted thigh because God had crippled him. But he had seen the face of God. Peniel.

I have seen the face of God. And he says, My life is preserved. Had God come down from that ladder that night as he lay at Bethel, no doubt he would have been consumed.

But having learned God's ways a little and having partaken in measure of God's glory, he was now unable to receive more of that fullness. So Christ was able to come forth and to make himself known to him in a greater measure than he had ever known before. We say these things to encourage God's people in this hour because we know that there is much distress amongst God's people.

Much discouragement. Much perplexity. Perplexity because things aren't adding up.

And you set your heart on a certain course and you know very well that God was in it. And God had led you in your past. And you knew that and you were aware of it and rejoiced in it.

But what you didn't understand was that it was just for a season, that God had something better in mind. And when it begins to shake under your feet, we get all upset not realizing that God is doing that because He's got something better in mind. Forty-one times as Israel trudged through the wilderness, they made stopping places and places of rest.

Places of rest. We're told there were places of rest because we're told that the cloud of glory moved on ahead to search out a resting place for His people. So that they were resting places.

But after every stopping place had fulfilled its purpose and it was God's intention to move them on, the cloud of glory would move on and they had to move on. Because that was not their final rest. It was just a little preparatory step along the way until they came to that final rest.

And every one of those stopping places were necessary. Every one were necessary because every one did a certain work in their life which was needful for a people who would go in. It was God's intention that every one of these stopping places would be stepping stones.

But it's up to you and I whether these stopping places become stepping stones unto a greater fullness or places of judgment for our lack of faith and because of our unbelief. Sad to say, with the old generation of Israelites it became places of judgment. I often think of that one place.

Difficult name. Kibra Hadavah which means graves of lust which the Spirit of God chose as a resting place for His people in that wilderness journey. The cloud of glory settled there.

It was to be a resting place for His people. But because their hearts were not open to God it became to them the graves of lust. For they lusted after flesh and they failed God at Kibra Hadavah.

If you and I could only realize that every stopping place, every place that God would lead us in our Christian journey as we seek to do His will is ordained of Him as a preparation for the next step. What a difference it would make when the way gets hot and weary and dry and barren then we say, well, Lord, it's just a stopping place. This is not my real rest.

I'm on my way to Canaan. So God help us to see that the dealings of God along the way are intended to be stepping stones and let's make them to be stepping stones of His provision into Canaan life rather than places where God must come forth and manifest His judgments upon us. And why was it so with them? Because of an evil heart of unbelief.

It was because of an evil heart of unbelief that they refused to recognize that when God said, I'm leading you into a good land, a land that flows with milk and honey, God meant it. But every stopping place along the way they chided and murmured against God and said, this is no resting place. This is no place of pomegranates and figs and grapes.

We had that back there. It was much better back there. Where? Elam.

There were palm trees and springs of water, lush grass. It was much better back at Elam than it is here. And that's true.

But that wasn't their resting place. That was just a stopping place on their way to Canaan. And Elam could not begin to compare to Canaan.

God is seeking to cause His people to catch a clear vision these days because I'm always a little fearful that if we do not settle in our hearts the vision that God has before His people, God is going to do something great and marvelous and we're going to say, this is it. We're going to stop short of God's full desire. Paul feared for the Hebrew Christians.

He feared for them lest they should come short of the desire of God's heart. He wasn't fearing for their salvation, but he's fearing that they fall short of what God intended. Because if we fall short of God's intention, we've really gone nowhere.

We've really gone nowhere. Because as various brethren speak of the three stages of growth in one's life, we're made to be aware that that middle stage is always preparatory for the final one. And so there's the blade and the ear and the full corn.

And the blade is wonderful, and that's to prepare the ear. And the ear is wonderful, but that's to bring forth the full corn. And if we stop at the ear, well then, you might as well stay in the place of the blade.

Or you might as well not have germinated at all. In other words, God is saying if we do not really desire to go unto the fullness of God's intention, better that we start not at all. And so Paul says, I fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to have come short of it.

For unto us was a promise the gospel preached even as unto them. But the word preached did not profit them. The ones that were in the wilderness where the gospel for that day came forth of going into this land, did not profit them.

Not being mixed with faith. The word not being mixed with faith. Some translations bring out the thought because they themselves were not united, joined by faith unto those who brought the word.

That when the word came forth, they didn't grasp the word and become a part of it. They weren't joined to it. And so the word did not profit them.

Please understand and be assured that as we seek to bring forth a living word, it's not to fill your hearts and minds with certain doctrines and things that we think are so important for you to have. But we desire

and pray that it will be truly a living word that you can embrace. Because if you hear it, if it goes forth by the Spirit and you receive it by the Spirit, it will be to you a living word which you can embrace and which as you embrace it, it will bring to you life.

For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The letter, the logic, the logos, you might say, the fundamental truths that are written there in the word. The letter.

But necessary. Don't say, forget the letter. The letter was ordained of God.

Every jot and tittle of it. The letter killeth, you say. I know, but God does that, that He might bring forth life.

So as you embrace the letter of the Word and let the Spirit of God crack open that shell, that covering of the Hebrew and the Greek and the English language, crack it open that the life that God intended might come forth, then though the letter killeth, the Spirit bringeth forth life. And so they were not joined unto that Word that went forth and therefore did not profit them, and they perished in the wilderness. And God lamented over that whole generation that came out of Egypt by Moses, lamented, you hear Him lamenting.

We hear Him saying, I was grieved for that whole generation. We hear Him saying, they have not known my ways. We hear Him saying, so I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my rest.

But we hear Him saying further, it remaineth therefore that some must enter therein. For though man fails in the promises of God, God put the promise there. He sent the Word forth into the earth and He says it's going to bring forth according to the intention of my heart.

God says I'm not going to take it back into my own heart until it's fulfilled the purpose for which I sent it forth. For God says as the rain cometh down from heaven and the snow and waters the face of the ground and returneth not thither, waters the ground that the garden might bring forth bread for the eater and seed for the sower, so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return to me void or empty, but it shall accomplish the thing for which I sent it forth and prosper and the thing for which I haven't got quite the exact quotation.

God says when I send forth a Word in the earth, I'm not going to take it back until it accomplishes the desire of my heart. I saw something a little different on that one time when I realized that the fullness of the Word, I mean that Word could embrace any promise, but when I saw that the fullness of the Word was nothing less than the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and that God planted Him in the earth. And God says, this One, this beloved Son of Mine, He shall not come back to my throne until I have accomplished the purpose for which I sent Him forth.

And He didn't. For we hear Him saying, I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do. But we also hear the apostle saying, or rather Luke, the writer of the Gospels, the act of the things that Jesus began to do when He was here on earth, that He's continuing that now in the heavens.

And so He finished the work He had to do on earth, but He went out from the heavens to complete the work that God had given Him to do. For the totality of Christ's work of redemption was not to be found merely in... I shouldn't say merely, but only in the work of redemption on earth, but in His ascension and glorification and His enthronement at God's right hand where He would complete the work of redemption. And if we could only understand that, that the Lord Jesus Christ is at God's right hand as our great High Priest and Intercessor, as a mediator between God and man, and He Himself, the Word that went back having fulfilled the Scripture and having fulfilled the desire of God's heart, sent forth the Word again

because the Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

And just as truly as God laid upon Jesus a commission when He came into the earth to work out this great plan of redemption and die on the cross for the sins of the world, went back to heaven having glorified the Father and having finished the work which God gave Him to do, His vicar... I use that expression for the simple reason it's applied to a man in the earth which is not right. The Holy Spirit is the vicar of Christ, God's representative in the earth. The one who came here in Christ's stead.

A living Word from the heart of Jesus, the Spirit of truth, whom God sent into the earth with a commission. And God says, He shall not return unto me until He has accomplished the purpose for which I sent Him forth. The Holy Spirit will not be taken out of the earth until He is brought forth in the earth the intention of God's heart, which is not this time the work of redemption, but the purpose for which He redeemed us that He might be the firstborn among many brethren and that we might be conformed to the image of His Son.

And then He might create in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace, that He might bring forth in the earth the body of the temple of God, which is the habitation of God by the Spirit. And that Word has gone forth in the earth when the Spirit of God came down to abide in this temple. God will not receive that Word back void and empty.

My Word shall not return to me void, but it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it. Can you praise Him for that? He does not give us abundant assurance and hope to know that the God who has spoken is a God who cannot lie, a God who has always been faithful to His promises. And He said to the Holy Spirit, take my church, cleanse it, wash it, purify it, purge it, send into it midst the fires of God the purging, cleansing flames of my Spirit.

Take away all the dross, join my body together member to member that it becomes a vital, living expression of myself in the earth. That's the commission He has. Jesus said He shall take of mine and show it unto you.

He shall take from me and show it, reveal it, express it, manifest it unto you. He shall take of the things of the Son and reveal them in His church within the earth. Everything that pertains to the heart of God, His nature, His character, His purposes, everything that pertains to the beautiful nature and character of God was wrapped up in a bundle of flesh and laid in the arms of the Virgin Mary.

And of Him it was said that in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All the fullness of Godhead dwelt in that man and dwells in that man. Meaning simply not that all of God was there because God fills heaven and earth, but the fullness of any characteristic of God was in Christ.

The fullness of love, the fullness of joy, the fullness of peace, the fullness of longsuffering, the fullness of purity. Oh, whatever you can think of that pertains to God was in Jesus because He was the pleroma of God, the fullness of God. But can you receive this mystery that Paul says that you and I as members of the church of Christ are the pleroma of Christ, the fullness of Christ? That everything that Jesus was in His purity, in His holiness, in His life, in His glory, in His love, everything that He was, that fullness has now been transferred to a body in the earth so that the church of the living God should become the fullness, the pleroma of Him that filleth all and in all.

So many things could be said here. I think we'll just close shortly. Talking about coming to know God and pursuing God, not as a doctrine, a knowledge about Him, but as a vital relationship with Him.

And how God puts forth things that would draw us unto that. He wants us to seek His face. He wants us to come to know Him, but every time we think we're right there at the door, He seems to back off.

He's not there. He's eluding us. He's only doing that to draw us into that place where He can bring forth that fullness that He desires.

And if we're aware of that, let us beware when it seems that God is saying no and withdrawing His presence. It seems that He's forsaking us. If we know this principle and we can say, Lord, You're just testing me.

I'm not going to be discouraged. I'm not going to back off. You're going to make the way harder.

I'm still going to pursue You. Because that's really what He's after. And so along comes the crucifixion and all the hopes and dreams of the disciples were completely shattered for the simple reason that nothing added up.

Nothing fitted into the scheme of things. It fitted perfectly into God's scheme. Nothing fitted into the scheme of the disciples.

He tried many years to cause them to see what He was really getting at, but somehow it evaded their hearts. Their minds were hardened. They couldn't see it.

But little by little, He was able to cause them to comprehend in some faint measure what He really had in mind when He came to earth. And then when He died, it just seemed, well, forget it. That's the end.

But it was actually at that moment where they stood at the threshold of the greatest revelation of Christ that they had ever known. Giving you and I hope and encouragement that when it seems that the hopes and dreams of all our lives lay shattered at our feet, it's at that very moment that we stand on the brink and the threshold of the greatest revelation of the Lord in our lives that we have ever known. And so He was crucified.

Well, there were rumors He rose from the dead, but that sounded very far-fetched. And the two disciples were on their way home on resurrection day wondering what it was all about that their Messiah, who came to rule and to reign and to set up a throne in Jerusalem, had been crucified. Wild rumors that He had risen, but no evidence of it.

When a stranger joined them along the way and walked with them, questioned them, talked as though he was ignorant of what was going on. What things are you talking about? They opened their hearts. And then He opened His heart and began to expound unto them all things that were written in the Scriptures concerning Him that Christ must need to come.

He must suffer. He had to die on the cross in order that He might enter into His glory. And the Word clung to their heart.

There was something about it that was fresh and vital. And so they walked along. We don't know how long.

And they said, Well, we must go this way. And the stranger started to walk along the road that they'd been on trying to get away from them, trying to elude them, trying to shake them off. Not really.

When you come to understand the heart of Christ, you'll understand that every test, every trial, every difficulty, every perplexity is not an attempt of the Lord to shake you off. It's God's way of causing you to cry upon His name more earnestly. And that's why He sends the test.

And that's why Jesus pretended that He was going to leave them and go on His way. All the while hoping, Oh, won't they call me back? Won't they cling to me? Won't they say, please come back? He didn't want to go up there alone. He wanted to have fellowship with them.

But Isaiah said, Verily thou art a God that hideth thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior. And that's the way it seems with God. Always trying to hide Himself.

Oh no. He just wants to draw you and I out into that place where we'll more earnestly desire Him and long for Him. Where we'll desire Him more than anything else in life or in death.

And they clung to Him. They said, Noel, come and abide with us. And He went with them.

That's what He wanted to do. That's what He intended. But He didn't offer Himself.

He waited for them to lay hold upon Him. I wish we could understand that principle. When we come to a crossroads, the Master doesn't really want to leave us.

But we have to cling more earnestly to Him. So He went with them and sat down with them at the table. And the one thing that they would have desired above everything else in life at that moment was to sit down with the Lord Jesus at a table and talk to Him.

And it was happening and they didn't know it. You know that happens many times as the saints of God are gathered together and the ministration goes forth in the Spirit and there's an anointing on the audience and they're hearing the words of God and their hearts burning within them. You know the Lord Jesus is in your midst.

Just as truly as they sat down with the disciples at that table up there at Emmaus, but their eyes were holding that they should not see Him, should not know Him. We've pointed this out so often, but we must emphasize it again. That He talked with them and their hearts had burned within them, but it wasn't until He took the bread and broke it that He was revealed.

It wasn't until He took the loaf and broke it that Christ was revealed. You want that greater fullness? That greater revelation of the Christ? It's not going to come until this loaf, this body, this bread that God is preparing which you're so desirous to take now and take it to the hungry people because people are hungry. We've got bread.

Let's take it to them. We've got bread. God says, no, bring the loaves to Me.

I've got to break them. For it's only in the breaking of the bread that Christ is revealed. And it's only in the revelation of Christ that His glory is going to shine forth into the nations.

And it's the burden of the Spirit of God to so fulfill the work of redemption in the hearts of His people that His salvation will go forth as a lamp that burneth and no longer just as a word that is spoken. And so the prophet said, for Zion's sake I will not hold my peace. For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

I don't care if people say it can't happen. It's the burden of God's heart. It's the burden that He's laid upon the Spirit of God and the earth that He will give God no rest until God establishes and until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

And the thing that thrilled my heart is we began teaching on that five or six years ago. And a lad came up from Texas and he had the music for it. Set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem.

The thing that thrilled our hearts is that God not only made the declaration of His intention, but He made provision to see that intention fulfilled by raising up watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem with a ministry by the Spirit that would be so effective that because of the ministry of the priesthood and the church, there would be a crying unto God day and night to do and to bring to being the intention of His own heart. I said, watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day or night, neither make mention of the name of the Lord. Keep not silence and give Him no rest until you establish, until you make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Do not shrug off this burden of the Spirit that comes upon you at times to pray for God's Jerusalem because it's the Spirit of God prompting you of one of God's watchmen on the walls to cry unto Him day and night, O God, we're not going to give You rest until You establish and until You make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. For God's intention for His church is not just that His people praise the Lord, which we try to do mechanically, make a big noise thinking we're praising the Lord, but that we should be under the praise of His glory who first came to Christ. And as we become the praises of God, there'll be no problem with the praises of God going forth from His temple.

We should be to the praise of His glory. That we should show forth the excellency of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. God's burden for His people is God's burden for His people because though God's heart was fully satisfied and found perfect delight in His only begotten Son, and was able to say this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased or better in whom is all my delight, this one in whom God found total delight also has a heart that yearns for His people.

And the heart of Jesus cannot be content until He can stand with a vast company of younger brethren and say, behold, I and the children whom Thou has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel. That together we might be presented before the throne of God, members of one body. Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone and the Head and the One who will forever have the preeminence in all things.

I'm already coming to the last thing. I don't know if we know it too well. On Thy wall, Jerusalem Which shall never hold their King Day or night, day that may Mention of the Lord Keep not silent And give Him no rest Until the Son of Man ...in my heart for this week.

It is raising up a ministry unto Himself in this hour. And as God's Word is going forth, it's looking for a resting place in the hearts of His people to bring forth that expression in the earth. One of the scriptures that is precious in my own heart is God sent a word unto Jacob and it lighted upon Israel.

God is sending a word to His people but it will only find rest upon Israel, a people that come forth as the Prince of God. And so the Lord in this hour is sending forth a word diligently with a spirit of urgency for His people to cling to that word and it can only find rest in the fulfillment in God's people. He sent a word unto Jacob and it rested upon Israel.

And God is sending forth a word as we all see the Jacob in our lives and cry out to Him that He would become that righteousness that we long for. And it's going to find a resting place in the hearts of God's people as in their time of confrontation with the Lord. God is so weak in the people that cling unto Him and they become the expression of the purpose of God in the earth.

And in this hour God is raising up an Elijah people. He's sending forth a word sifting the hearts of men that in the end there is a people that are mingled with faith, joined unto the word. With a cry in their heart that that word find expression within the hearts of God's people.

We live in a day of tremendous revelation and knowledge is going forth. But it's not true revelation and it's not true knowledge unless it's bringing forth a heart for God's people to come into the fullness of what He has called us to. Paul prayed for the Ephesians for the spirit of wisdom and revelation to rest upon them that they might know the riches of God's inheritance in His people, not our inheritance in Him.

God has a rich inheritance within His people. As God's people lay hold of that there's going to come forth a ministry in the house of God to raise up God's people that they may cleave unto Him and seek Him. All revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church is for God's people to get a heart for God's people.

It's not a selfish vision but Joshua and Caleb learned that in the wilderness they had the faith to enter in the first time. But they knew that there could only be a possessing of the land that God had promised them as each Israelite walked in obedience and had come and taken their inheritance in the land. And God is raising up a ministry that will cause each of God's people to take their responsibility and to be joined unto His voice and to become that expression in the earth.

For it's not one man that God is looking for but He's looking for a corporate people to express the many dimensions and the beauty and the perfections of the Christ that has called us and is wooing us unto Himself in this hour. And so God is raising up an Elijah people. Elijah came forth on the scene in such a time of debauchery and God's house, Baal was worshipped and it says the altar of the Lord was broken down.

And God is raising up an Elijah people to once again rebuild the altars of the Lord and to establish His way, His life and His light in the midst of His people. And in this hour there is tremendous sifting as God is seeking out a people that will be joined unto the word that He's sending forth in this day. Elijah means the Lord is God.

Elijah came on the scene on Mount Carmel and he gathered the prophets of Baal together. When God sends forth a ministry it's to come to a fulfillment. Elijah's ministry seemed to be cut short but it found its fulfillment.

Elijah means the Lord is Jehovah. And on Mount Carmel they gathered together. Elijah said, you choose the sacrifice, you build an altar and you call upon your God.

And the God that answers by fire, He is the God of Israel. And after Baal, the prophets of Baal have faltered into the ground. God's prophet comes on the scene and they drench the sacrifice with water.

And Elijah prayed and the Lord answered by fire. And the heart and the cry of God's people said, the Lord is God. And God is sending forth a ministry in the earth.

He's putting a word within His people's hearts that as we minister that word it finds its expression in the hearts of God's people. The cry of Elijah's heart was the Lord is God. And he could not rest until that cry came forth from God's people, the Lord is God.

And there's much sifting going on in the house of God in this hour. And I just wanted to share from verse 10 of 1 Kings 19. And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only am left.

And they seek my life to take it away. And he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by and a great wind rent the mountain and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord.

But the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire a still small voice. And it was so when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering end of the cave. And behold, there came a voice into him and said, What doest thou hear, Elijah? With every new thing that God does in his people, it's preceded with wind, fire, and shaking.

And the glory of the Lord was departing from the temple. Ezekiel saw a whirlwind coming out of the north. He saw the fire of amber unfolding within itself.

And there was great repercussions and shakings within Israel. And in the day that the church was born, in the day of Pentecost, there was a wind, a fire, and a shaking. And a new declaration and ascending forth of the revelation of God in the earth.

And God in this hour is subjecting his people to winds of adversity, to fires of purification, and to great shakings that only that which is of him can withstand. But in all this, Elijah was not moved. And God is looking for a people that in the midst of tremendous shaking and winds blowing and fires, there's a people who aren't moved from the word that they've embraced.

And Elijah only responded to the still, small voice of God. And God is looking for a people in this hour that will not be moved by prophecy as such, but will be moved by the still, small voice of God. They'll not be moved by great demonstrations of fire, whether it be purification or judgment.

And they will not be moved by tremendous winds of adversity that blow contrary to the word that they've cherished in their hearts. But that God is looking and longing for a people that will respond to the still, small voice of God. And it was so when Elijah heard that that he presented himself before the Lord.

And in 1 John it says, this is the victory, even our faith. And God is looking for a people in this hour that will cling to the word that he's put within their hearts. For this is the victory.

For every word that God has sent into the earth must and will find its expression. And whether some fall short in the wilderness, all the promises of God are yea and amen. Let the word of God go forth in his anointing.

Let our ears and our hearts be anointed to hear his word. And let us respond only to his word in the still, small voice that God is calling in this hour. You're not carried away with all the shakings and the rumblings.

For God is building his church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So this is a tremendous hour we're in and we're just trusting that God's people have an ear to hear what the Spirit says. For God is once again sending forth an Elijah's people to turn the hearts of the children unto the Father.

And when Elijah's ministry had come to an end, there was a fulfillment in the earth in Elisha. And Elisha performed twice as many miracles as Elijah. And so in the passing away of one realm, one realm of ministry in God, there's a bringing forth of another.

And John the Baptist came on the scene pointing to Jesus saying, Here is Jesus, follow ye him. But there's another ministry in the earth that must arise, as Peter declared. He said, We have not brought to you devised fables when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Greek word there for coming means presence. God is going to have a ministry in the earth that will literally present Christ in his presence to the earth. And that is just coming.

It's that unfolding and that unveiling of Christ in his people. There's a ministry that is longing in the heart of God that he's going to bring forth to the earth. It's not a ministry that points to Jesus' exterior and say, Jesus is up there.

It's going to be a people that unveil and reveal the Christ. As Peter walks into the temple, he said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have. He imparted the Christ to that man and that man could rise up in the virtue and the impartation of that and walk in a new way.

So let us lift up our vision and recognize the place that God has called us unto. Cherish the word that he's planted within our hearts. For God is going to bring his word to absolute perfect fulfillment in his son.

Amen.

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