

Revelation of the Heart

by George Warnock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual birth, self-awareness, and compassion for others in order to experience true spiritual growth and maturity.

Duration: 58:04

Scripture: Luke 2:25, Luke 2:28

Topics: "Heart"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of self-pity and bitterness in the wilderness journey of believers. He emphasizes the need for God to heal any bitterness in our hearts and transform us into streams of life for others. The preacher then reads from Luke 2:25-32, highlighting the story of Simeon who was waiting for the consolation of Israel and had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would see the Lord's Christ before his death. The preacher emphasizes the importance of God searching our hearts and enabling us to walk in the light, rather than just knowing scriptures or doctrine. He also mentions the significance of Mary's experience in turning bitter waters into sweet, and how God wants to change and conform us to the image of His Son.

Transcript

From what we are by natural birth to what He desires us to be because of that new seed of life that He's given us. And so there's a process involved. There's a process involved and it's the processing of the Word of God in our lives.

It's the processing of God's Word, but I don't mean just the Bible. I mean that Living Word. That Living Word that comes forth by the Spirit to change us, to cut us under.

Say, no, that soul, that's natural. That's your way of doing it. This is God's way.

Only that anointed Word will do that. So we've got to continue to emphasize that. That when we speak, it must be by the Holy Spirit.

It must be God's mind that's coming forth. Oh, we're so quick to judge and to discern. Something is done, something happens, and we've got the answers, you know.

God help us to wait upon Him and know what God would say. So Peter says, be slow to speak, slow to speak. Something comes up, we'll do it this way.

But only the Word, the quickened Word of God is able to separate and say, no, that's soulish. This is Spirit here. Because they're as far apart as night and day.

They're as far apart as the heavens are from the earth. The heavens are higher than the earth. So the prophet said, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And God is in the process of revealing the thoughts of hearts. I know that we're still having lots of difficulties in the midst of God's people, lots in our own fellowship. I know that.

To me, it's a sign that God is working. I'm not discouraged. I've always prayed, God, I don't want to just be a teacher in the sense of just, you know, imparting to people a certain area of knowledge.

I don't want to do that. Never did want it. And when it became apparent that I was going to be a teacher of the Word, it sort of bothered me a little, because teaching, who wants teaching? All I knew of teaching as a young person in the church was just some dry explanation of some scripture.

I didn't want that. I didn't understand at the time that all ministry that God gives, God desires it to be a spiritual, spiritual impartation, spiritual going forth of God's Word. And so I'm glad that in some measure God has brought that forth in my own ministry.

And I pray it will continue. God forbid that we should be seekers after knowledge, but seekers after Him, and therefore the knowledge of Him, and not just facts about Him. And so as soon as we begin to teach on various aspects of truth, we tuck it away in our little minds, and that's a good message, a good teaching.

We have tapes on it and write books on it. But I pray God it will do more than that. I pray God it will begin to search out the hearts of God's people.

And if God searches out our hearts and divides soul and spirit, then we can go on with Him. There's no going on with Him just by knowing the scriptures or by knowing doctrines. It's only as God searches out our hearts and gives us grace to walk in the light.

I'm going to read this passage about Marah again. You might get weary of it. But we're going to have to keep coming back to Marah unless we learn the secret of turning those bitter waters into sweet.

God's going to bring us back to it. And when they came to Marah, they'd gone three days' journey into the wilderness, and they came to a pool of water. And they looked down into the pool, and I never thought of this until I got this poem that was sent me the other day.

But when they looked down into that pool of water, what do you think they saw? They saw themselves. And when you look into the pool, what do you see? You see yourself. And that's what God led them there for, to see themselves.

And so they took a drink, and it was bitter, and they couldn't drink it. And they complained against Moses, and they complained against God. And God says, that's you.

Don't you see yourself down in that pool? That's you. But God, I'm thirsty, and I want a drink. I want a drink of refreshing water.

I can't drink that stuff. And God says, that's you. And God says, I want to change you so that you can drink waters out of your own cistern.

So they murmured against Moses, What shall we drink? And Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. You can't drink out of the cisterns of your life until you've cut down the tree and cast it into those bitter waters of your life. You can drink out of your own cistern only when the cross of Christ is there.

Only when you recognize that nothing anybody can do can hurt you. Oh, you say, we've had that teaching before. I know, we've had the teaching before.

But like Brother Austin Sparks said, it seems to take a crisis of some kind to bring us to that place where God can apply the teaching to us. You can't apply the teaching to your heart except in that mere experience that God would lead you to. Let's return to 2 Peter 3. I'll read several verses here.

Likewise, ye wise, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wise. Without the word, you don't need to preach to your husbands anymore. When they see the change, they're going to say, I've got to get what you've got.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing of gold and putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible. The hidden man of the heart is easily seen.

But all that much speaking reveals that that heart is not right. But without saying anything, if the hidden man is there and has been changed and transformed, everybody can see it in that which is not corruptible. Even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also trusted in God adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord. Sarah called Abraham Lord.

My Lord, she said. Whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement. It would be wonderful to have wives like that.

But then we're not going to have wives like that unless the husbands change too. Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife that's under the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life. Heirs together of the grace of life.

Giving honor unto the wife. And you see, we wonder why our prayers are not answered. And here's what Peter tells us why.

That your prayers be not hindered. God grant that somehow we'll be able to so impart, have such an impartation of Christ in our homes. That the women will be adorned with a meek and a quiet spirit.

That the husbands will dwell with the wife according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife that's under the weaker vessel. And the weaker vessel, when she has a meek and a humble spirit, is quick to recognize it. She's not out to say, I'm strong, I'm just as strong as you are.

If she has the grace of God in her heart, she just knows that she's weaker and dependent upon the strength of her husband. And she likes it that way if she has a strong husband. And if she doesn't have a strong husband, she generally says, okay, I'll be the strong one.

Instead of seeking God that her husband might be that strong one. Because she can become strong no matter how she tries. And there's nothing wrong with this arrangement.

Don't you love your Lord Jesus, and don't you recognize that you're weaker than He is? And don't you love it that way so that He and His strength can always support you? Don't you love that arrangement? Well, He's for the bride and He's the groom. And so there's nothing wrong with this arrangement. But together we're one.

Heirs together of the grace of life. Isn't it wonderful that you and I can be one with our Lord Jesus? So one that me and my weakness, He can supply that strength that I lack. And when God brings this about in our families, we're going to have answered prayers.

That your prayers be not hindered. I looked up the word hindered, it means cut down. Same word that's used when the gardener says, go and cut down that tree, it's not fruitful.

So our prayers go up and they're cut down. Here's the secret to it. A week or so ago when there was a little bit of a talk about how these new converts were having their prayers answered, how God was moving and there was a little bit of a smile, you know, went through the fellowship as we sort of thought to ourselves, well, wait until they get on further with the Lord.

They'll find a lot of unanswered prayers too. And I know that sometimes in our immaturity, we'll ask for a lot of things and God will answer us because we're new converts and He wants to strengthen us and encourage us. And then after a bit, He'll tell us to wait a bit.

To, you know, I'm not going to answer this right away. I recognize that. But it still bothered me because God forbid we should have the thought that unanswered prayer is a sign of maturity.

God forbid that we should come to that place when unanswered prayer is considered to be a sign of maturity. God wants to answer our prayers. I believe God is answering our prayers in many respects.

And when He isn't answering, I think it's simply because He wants to bring us into maturity and He's saying, you've got to know my will. I'm no longer going to answer all these carnal prayers. I want you to walk in my ways and know my will so that you can pray effectually.

John says this is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. So rather than sort of smugly thinking, well, you know, we're mature now and we pray but we're not always sure whether God will answer us or not. I think we should start and question ourselves.

Is it a sign of maturity? Is it a sign that we need another trip back to Mara? Back to Mara, that looking into the pool we might see ourselves. God brings us to our Mara to a place of discovery. Mara is the place of discovery.

Did God want them to drink bitter waters? No. Well, then why did He lead them to Mara? To show them the thoughts and the contents of their hearts. That the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.

God wanted to bring them into Canaan. But they were in no position to enter Canaan until they'd come to Mara and discern the bitterness within their hearts. Canaan is a life of fruitfulness and a life of victory.

Actually, speaking of the antitype, it's that life in the Spirit that God wants to bring us into. And you and I are the wilderness. You and I are that wilderness.

And so God leads us through the tangled maze of this wilderness life to show us what our nature is like. That right there in the wilderness of our own nature, God might begin to root out and tear down and take out the weeds and cultivate and plant the seeds of grace and truth and love and gentleness and meekness. Peter goes on to say... Let's turn to it again.

1 Peter 3. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. When we come into a nature like this, we'll have no problem with unanswered prayers. As we pray and we feel we're praying in the will of God, let us remember that God wants to answer our prayers.

But He's slow to answer our prayers because He wants to change us. And if God answered all our prayers right now, we wouldn't be interested in being changed anymore. And you know that's right.

If we just got everything we wanted from God, we wouldn't be concerned about being changed anymore. We see that in the lives of these who profess that they can claim a miracle every day, get their prayers answered whenever they cry unto God, and their lives are not changed. Do you want to be like that? We want to be changed.

So God says, well, I want to answer those prayers, but I want to change you. That you be a people of one mind, having compassion one of another. We have it for ourselves.

Be pitiful. Well, we're pitiful. But self-pity.

Isn't it? I'm not making light of any situations because I know there's some very grievous situations. Maybe God wants to show us our own hearts first before He's going to deal with those other things. Be pitiful.

And so here's Saul. He's sitting there. He's trying to kill David.

He calls him his enemy, and David's just running for his life. David could have killed him easily if he wanted to on many occasions. But he loves Saul.

When Saul died, he wrote a beautiful poem about the anointed of the Lord, how the mighty are fallen. But because of the evil of Saul's heart, he considered David his enemy. And he's sitting down there with his soldiers, and he says, isn't there anyone here? He says, you've conspired with the son of Jesse.

Everybody's against me, and there's no one here that feels sorry for me. No one here that feels sorry for me to tell me that Jonathan, my son, is made friends with the son of Jesse, my enemy. Nobody here that feels sorry for me? One man spoke up.

Doeg the Edomite. He says, yeah, I know about David. I was there at the temple when David came in, and the priest gave him a sword, and he gave him bread and sent him on his way.

And so Doeg felt sorry for him. And so Saul sent and got all the priests down, brought them all down, had them all slain. Turned to his servants and said, go slay the priests of the Lord.

And though they were following Saul and fighting his battles, they refused to do that. Saul's own soldiers refused to slay the priests of the Lord. Saul turned to Doeg the Edomite.

He says, you go and slay them. Oh, he relished that. He went and he fell on them and slew them, every one except one young man who escaped.

Is there no one that feels sorry for me? So we're pitiful. Any pity that's for ourselves, let's check it out pretty fast. Say, God, deal with that.

Deal with that self-pity. Pity for others, compassion for others, you can be sure it's from the Lord. But if you start feeling sorry for yourself, you better have another look in the waters of man.

And you drink from those waters, and they'll make you bitter and bitter and more bitter. Until you take the tree and cut it down and throw it in and say, Lord, I thank you for this experience, for revealing to me the thoughts and the intents of my heart. I thank you for this experience.

Bitter, I know. God can turn every bitter thing into sweetness. We're able to turn to the Lord and say, Lord, I'm the problem.

Deal with my life and straighten out my life. Sweeten the waters in my life. And you're going to discover people are going to be coming to these Mara waters for a drink because the Mara has been removed.

Why don't they come to you for help? Why don't they come to you and say, I just want to be with you. I just want your prayers. I need your help.

I need your counsel. Why aren't they doing it? Because they go away with a bitter taste. When you and I have the waters of our Mara sweetened, people are going to come and find a refreshing drink.

So just the other day, I got this poem from Janet Emery. You remember I passed around some of her poems here last year. She wrote me last week.

She's known a lot of suffering. You sense that in her poems. One stooped to weep and watched the bitter tears of sorrow fall to the earth and form a little pool in which he saw himself.

Then Jesus came and quickly kneeling down, he traced one word upon him, compassion. The Mara's waters by that touch were made so pure and sweet that others came to drink their fill from now a living spring and went away refreshed. And as they drank, the weeper too had quenched his thirst and he will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

As they drank, the weeper too had quenched his thirst. It's only as we're able to quench the thirst of others that we're going to find our thirst quenched. Jesus sat in the well at Samaria and said, give me to drink.

He was thirsty, with a different kind of thirst than the woman of Samaria had. But he was thirsty. And God is thirsty.

And we're thirsty, but as we cast the waters into the Mara and drink of those refreshing streams, as our streams flow forth in blessings of others, we're going to find refreshing in that. The reason we're thirsty and we can't quench our thirst is because the bitter waters have troubled our own spirit and soul. When God sweetens those waters and they flow forth and others are blessed and helped, we're refreshed because of others being refreshed.

We're going to discover that. We're going to discover that there's going to be refreshing every time we refresh the lives of others. But how can God do that? As long as there's self-pity.

As long as, like Saul, we're saying, isn't there anybody here that feels sorry for me? Isn't there anybody here that has pity on me? May God heal every trace of bitterness from the Mara of our wilderness journey

that we might be streams of life. Chapter 2. Chapter 2. We'll read from verse 25. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.

The same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

We'll just stop at that. I wanted to speak particularly about the latter part of what I read here. But Simeon, his name means hearing.

Remember, Simeon was one of the sons of Jacob. It means hearing. And I think it's significant that this one whom God had chosen to introduce the Messiah here in the temple for the first time was a man who had heard from God.

His name was Simeon. And God had laid upon him a certain burden. How many months or years, we do not know.

But God had laid upon him this burden. And the burden was the revelation that God had given him concerning the coming of Messiah and that he was not going to die until he had seen the Messiah. And you know, it's a wonderful thing when we get a revelation and God quickens the truth to your heart and you see something and you lay hold upon it and often it's brand new and just what you're looking for, just what your heart's been hungering for and you didn't know what it was until you heard this truth and it encourages me when occasionally I'll get letters from people and they said, you know, for years I've been hungering for something, didn't know what it was and this writing just seemed to show me this is what I want, this is what I'm after.

And how wonderful to get a revelation, an illumination from the Word. But as surely as God gives to any of us a revelation, a truth, a vision of something he's going to do, immediately, the immediate response is joy, a sense of victory, a sense of, you know, great happiness and joy over what God has shown. But as surely as God gives the vision, let us remember that that vision is going to be our trial.

It's going to test us. It's going to try us. And we say, why does the Lord do it that way? Why should that be the case? Well, for the simple reason that God is out to change us.

God wants to change us. And we're slow to comprehend that. And of course the vision might involve blessing and power and authority or whatever.

And that's appealing to us. But the ultimate end of any truth, the ultimate end of any revelation God gives is to change us and conform us to the image of his Son. And of course we look at the Son of God and we

say, yes, Lord, I want to be like that.

I want to be like the Son of God. I want to be like the Lord Jesus. But we say it thoughtlessly because we don't know, we don't realize the great work that God must do in our lives to bring us into that image.

We think of him, you know, kind and loving and just and true. Oh, we just want to be like him. And we do.

But we don't know the great problem that God has in changing us, bringing us out of this old life and into that new one. For the simple reason we don't know our own hearts. We don't know our own hearts.

Simeon was given this revelation, but then it became a burden to him. We're told that he was a man of great age. He was an old man.

And how many years he waited for this, we don't know. But I'm inclined to believe, of every reason to believe, that he waited many long years because I know God does that. He just does it that way.

And he kept Moses waiting many, many long years. He kept Joseph waiting many years. He kept Abraham waiting many, many, many years.

He kept David waiting many, many years. He does that. You say, why does God do that? Is he just trying to, you know, put something before our eyes that we can't attain to? To tease us? Is he just taunting us? And that's the thought that often comes until we realize that God is seeking to work his nature within us and it's not something he can do overnight.

So that the vision becomes our trial and becomes God's method of refining us. Refining us. So I know with Simeon it must have been a burden to carry this truth and the reproach of it.

The constant reproach of it. And yet never seeing this Messiah that the Lord said he was going to see before he died. Getting older and older and older until no doubt he had the estimation of being a fanatic and maybe a little off.

Oh, he said that years ago. He said he was going to see the Messiah. Now look how feeble he's getting.

And so your vision becomes your test and your trial and becomes your reproach. But when it is all over, we see how greatly God was glorified in Simeon and how Simeon, though in his life we're not told of anything worthy that he did by way of serving the Lord or ministering to people. In his death we have recorded in Holy Scripture this great prophecy that he had no notion.

Here's an old man coming into the temple picking up the child Jesus and prophesying over him concerning Mary. He didn't have the slightest notion that those words would be written down for every generation of a church that was yet to be born for a couple thousand years. And here he is ministering to the church of every generation since then.

But to him it was just the last straw. He was about to die and he says, Now Lord, let your servant depart in peace. I've seen the Christ.

You've fulfilled your word. I can go and die now. His work was finished.

But no, it wasn't. For even in his death he left a legacy of God's faithfulness, God's truth. And Lord, now let us thou thy servant depart in peace.

I was reading an article by Austin Sparks on this and he points out that the word Lord is a Greek word despotis, despotis, from which we get our word despot. And it has that meaning. We think of a despot, of course, as a cruel dictator.

But the word actually means, a despot, it actually means one who has total control and authority. It's not the usual word for Lord. In fact, I looked it up in Strong's Concordance.

And there's only four instances, unless I missed one, there's only about four instances in the New Testament where this word Lord is used. It's used here, it's used in Acts. Remember the Christians gathered together and they said, Lord, why do the heathen rage? And in every case where this word is used, it speaks of one who has absolute control.

The one who has absolute authority. But generally the word is another word, Lord, which means one who is Lord, in control, but it implies other things. It implies referring to our Lord.

He's a true God. He's just. He's holy.

He's loving. He's kind. He's merciful.

And He's still Lord of all. But this word doesn't imply any of that other. It just simply implies one who is in total, absolute authority.

And Shimeon is saying, Lord, You're absolutely in control. I don't speak to You as a loving Lord or a kind Lord or a just Lord. I speak of You as one who has total mastery.

One who is in total control. And, you know, we've used the Lord and we try to use the Lord. The Lord is presented in these days as just one who's total love.

And He is all of that. But here Shimeon refers to Him as one who is in total control. One whom we serve and we have no rights of our own.

Paul has the same thought where over and over again he refers to himself as a bond slave of the Lord. A bond slave. Aren't we sons of God? Yes, we're sons of God.

But as sons go on into a more mature walk with the Lord, they take the position of servants, bond slaves. We're still sons of the Heavenly Father. But coming to know who our Heavenly Father is, as we come to recognize His greatness and His might and His sovereignty, we simply take the place as a bond slave.

Paul was an apostle. It's a great thing today to be an apostle or a prophet. Some great ministry.

But in every letter he wrote, practically, he would refer to himself as a doulos of the Lord, a bond slave. Now a doulos, a bond slave, has no rights. He has no rights.

We're always concerned about our rights. A doulos has none. He belongs to someone else.

Someone bought him and he belongs to him. He's a slave, purchased by another. No rights.

Now I know there's the fact that we're sons of God and as sons of God we have rights to come to God and to ask Him for what we need and so forth. And all that's true. We're not denying that we're sons.

When we say we're slaves, we're God's slaves, that's a position that we take voluntarily. We're not saying that God says to you and I, no, I want you to be my bond slave. No, He says I want you to be my son.

But His desire is that we'll come to know Him so well, come to love Him so much, that we'll voluntarily come to Him and say, Lord, I don't really want any more rights of my own. I know that you're so loving, you're so true, you're so wise, you're so full of wisdom and knowledge and understanding that I don't choose to exercise my rights anymore. I want you to do it for me.

I want to be just your do-loss. I want you to have absolute authority over my life. We do that voluntarily.

And so we're not saying that God saves you and then makes you His bond slave. That's something that you've got to choose to become. When you come to recognize how great He is, how wonderful He is, how loving He is, how kind He is and how wise He is.

And we learn that through experience. Always making mistakes, always fumbling our way along, always getting in difficulty and struggling to find our way out. Sooner or later we long to come to that place where we say, Lord Jesus, just be my despot, be my Lord, be my master.

I just want to be your bond slave. I don't want to have to choose and decide anything. I want you to do it for me.

And so it's a voluntary position that we take. But let's go on here. I didn't want to deal particularly with that part of it.

I wanted to come to what Simeon said in this prophecy concerning this child. Simeon blessed him and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. For his sign which shall be spoken against, yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

I wanted to speak a little along that line. This one is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. Christ is set for the fall and the rise, the falling and the rising.

You know that nations have crumbled over Christ and nations have risen up because of Christ. And that's just the way it is. But bring it right down to our own personal lives.

He's set for our fall and for our rise. For God must cause that old nature that we have to literally crumble in His presence before we're going to rise into the heights of His own nature, His own life. First of all, there's got to be a fall.

And so Jesus is set for that. And when Christ comes into our life, sure as that we might rise to be seated with Him in heavenly places. But before we're going to know that kind of a life in any experiential sort of way, we're going to have to know the falling.

There's got to be a coming down. There's got to be a humiliation. There's got to be a crumbling.

So He's set for the fall and the rising again. And for His sign which shall be spoken against. A sign.

He points in a certain direction. He changes your direction. God's people.

God desires that His people should be signs. We want to see the signs. And it's a wonderful thing when we hear of signs and wonders that are happening.

But we don't want to be followers of signs. God doesn't want us to be followers of signs. We read in the Old Testament, Paul quotes it in Hebrews.

Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given unto me. That's as far as it goes in Hebrews. But in the Old Testament it says they should be for signs and for wonders.

And Jonah was said to be a sign. God wants His people to be signs. Oh, we'd like to perform signs.

But no, I'm not talking about that. Before God's people are going to perform the kind of signs that God wants to perform, they've got to become a sign. They've got to be a people who point to the right direction.

They've got to be a people who are saying this is the way with authority and with power. And so Jesus was a sign not because He performed miracles, but He was a stumbling block. People came up against Christ and either stumbled or they found a new direction.

One or the other. They either stumbled at the stone of stumbling or they built upon the solid rock. God wants His people to be signs.

That when we come face to face with this evil generation, they're either going to stumble or they're going to say, wait a minute, I'm going the wrong way. Can you point me to the right way? A people who are crossing the world. They're antagonistic to the world.

They're opposed to it. And they become a sign. And Jesus was a sign.

Over the first 30 years of His life, He lived in more or less obscurity. He didn't cause any confrontations or the like because God was preparing Him. But when God sent Him forth and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, immediately He was a point of contention.

He had to be because He came a light into the world. And if He came a light into the world, it was to cause those which see to be made blind or to cause those that were blind to see. That's just how it was.

He says the world cannot hate you because they were living too much like the world. But me it hated because I testify of it that its works are evil. Now I know there's a lot of people saying this is wrong and that's wrong and they're pointing out all the sins that are going on in the world.

But they don't become a stumbling block nor do they become a foundation upon which people can build. They can see lots that's wrong, but they're not that kind of a sign that God wants His people to be. When God's people come into this place where they've been confronted with the sun and their lives have been changed and they bear the light and the glory of God, they too will be able to say I've come a light into the world that those which see not might see and that those which see might be made blind.

It's going to happen. When God's people come into that place where God wants them to be, they're either going to be a stumbling block or they're going to become a rock upon which the people are going to want to establish their foundation. And then Simeon went on and he said, Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.

Just a little parenthesis there to Mary. A sword shall pierce through thy soul also. Mary, the mother of Jesus.

When God brings forth His people in the earth, God's going to bring forth a people as truly as He brought forth the Christ through Mary. He's going to bring forth a corporate Christ through the woman that's clothed with the sun that we read of in the book of Revelation. Just as truly as He brought forth this pure, holy Son of God through the Virgin Mary.

He's going to bring forth a pure, holy, corporate people through that woman, that pure church that God is bringing into being. And so He says to this people, A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also. And we, like many a barren woman in the scriptures, find ourselves barren and helpless.

Like Hannah, we've been barren. Like Rachel, we've been barren. And many of God's heroes of faith in the Old Testament were born of barren women.

Because God would teach us that only when that people have come to that place of total helplessness in themselves and seeking God all the while they are existing in this state of barrenness, only then are they going to bring forth fruit for His honor and glory. We've mentioned so often that it was not until Hannah made the supreme commitment that God heard her prayer. God loved Hannah.

God kept her barren because He alone would be glorified in this one she would bring forth. It wasn't until Hannah found grace in her heart to say, Lord, if You'll give me this son, then I'll give him back to You and he'll be Yours all the days of his life. It wasn't until then that God heard and answered.

So we say again, God is waiting for the ultimate commitment. I know we make commitments. I know oftentimes we make them very lightly.

Oh, I'll be Yours, Lord. Do what I say, Lord, and I'll give You all the glory. Bless us, Lord, enlarge us, make us to be fruitful, and Lord, we'll give You all the glory.

And perhaps we mean well that oftentimes we don't know our own hearts. I'm not going to deal anymore with that because I want to come to this last point that Simeon brought up, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. We don't know our own hearts.

We don't know our own hearts until God, by His Holy Spirit, shines in the light of His own presence and reveals the state of our hearts. We don't know it. My prayer is that God will do this, that He'll begin to reveal the thoughts and the intents of God.

He's going to do it, and I believe He has done it in measure. But we understand from Paul's writing to the Hebrews, chapter 4, that it's only when the Word of God goes forth as a quickening one that the thoughts and the intents of the heart are going to be revealed. The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing, what does Simeon say? A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and the marrow and as a discernor of the thoughts and the intents, dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

By and large, the church doesn't know the difference between soul and spirit, and yet it's as different as night and day. And without going into all the theology about soul and spirit, let's just point out very briefly that the soul is the life, this natural life that we have, the life of this natural body by which we think and see and hear and feel. It's just the life of this body.

It's the soul life that we have. Paul speaks about the natural man or the natural life or the natural mind. He uses the word psychikos from the Greek word psyche, which is soul.

All he's saying is it's the soul life we have. It's the soul mind we have, and natural, that which we receive by birth. But there's another life, another kind of life, which we receive when we're born again.

It doesn't mean to say that when we receive that life, that suddenly our nature has been changed, but we do.

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