

Seven Great Themes in the Acts of the Apostles

by Gerhard Du Toit

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the time of the visitation of the Spirit and being humble and open to God's presence and guidance.

Duration: 1:16:16

Scripture: Joel 2:28-32, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 7:21-23, Acts 1:4-8, Romans 6:23

Topics: "Apostolic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of encountering a man who was eager to hear about God. The speaker passionately shared the gospel with him for about an hour, and the man was moved to tears. However, when the speaker asked if it was the time for the man to come to God, he surprisingly said no. It was later revealed that the man had wronged an elderly man 17 years ago, causing him financial hardship. In a public confession, the man asked for forgiveness, and the elderly man forgave him, leading to a powerful moment of reconciliation. The sermon also references Acts 1:4-5, where Jesus tells his disciples to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit, and Joel 2:28-32, which speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and signs in the heavens. The speaker concludes by emphasizing that God has come and encourages the audience to seek God's presence.

Transcript

Acts chapter 2. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. There appeared unto them clothed in tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all full to the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and they marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how here we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born, partners in the Medes, and the Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, and Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, and Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselyte, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them

speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

And they were all amazed, and they were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth it? But others who were mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, and blood, and fire, and vaporous smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and that notable day of the Lord comes.

It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call in the name of the Lord shall be saved. Just a few verses from chapter one, verse number four. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith ye, ye have heard of me.

For John truly baptized with water, but he shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days since. When they were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the season which the Father has put in his own power, but you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. You shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Father God, as we bow in thy presence again this night, is there a sense in which we want our hearts to become very quiet before God? Lord, it's so easy to sit in this meeting and to agree, but agree with sin in my heart. God, I believe tonight that we are standing in the presence of the one that has been risen from the dead, and our hearts have been humbled today as we've waited upon thyself, and we have sensed our deep sense of inadequacy for God. And I pray tonight that the hush of heaven will come to descend upon us in this gathering.

And I ask, Father God, that you will have your way in every one of our hearts. We ask that you will cover us under your precious blood. We ask, Father, that you will deal with us not just collectively, but individually this evening, so that we as your people will be able to seek your faith.

In Jesus' name, Amen. I would like to encourage you tonight as we go through God's word, because I really sense in my heart today that God is in our midst in a very precious way. And I would like to ask you tonight if God is speaking to you during the course of what we are going through this evening, that we would like you to leave the sanctuary and go down to the prayer room.

And what I'm saying to you, I'm saying to myself, if God is going to speak to me about anything that I'm saying this evening, then I would just leave right here and go down to the prayer room. And the prayer room, as you know, is downstairs. And even if you're somewhere in the middle, God is speaking to you

tonight about something in your life, I would like you to leave the sanctuary and get alone with God and stay there until you are through with God, with whatever He has been speaking to you about.

And I say that to my own heart. It's quite significant if you study the Acts of the Apostles that you will realize by studying that wonderful book that there are seven great themes in the Acts of the Apostles. There is in the Acts of the Apostles the theme of prayer.

And as you study the theme of prayer, you will discover that prayer was something that was very dominated in the lives of those early disciples. In fact, I was struck again today by the fact that the Bible is saying to us that those early disciples of the Lord Jesus, that when they came in Acts chapter 6 and there was tremendous pressure upon the early followers of Christ, that they did not say that we will give ourselves to the ministry of the Word of God in prayer, but they made a statement that I've applied to my own life. And they said, we will give ourselves to prayer and then the ministry of the Word of God.

So the place of prayer was very prominent in the lives of those early disciples. And it was one of the great themes in that wonderful book. And then we come across the theme of the Holy Spirit.

That's why the Acts of the Apostles can also be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit of God. There are about 260 references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. And if you look at the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles, you will discover that there are no less than 59 of those references and those wonderful chapters of that book.

It is a book that is full of the work and the ministry of the Spirit of God. Another great theme in the Acts of the Apostles is the theme of preaching. And there are about 17 great sermons that were preached in the Acts of the Apostles.

And if you look at those sermons, you will discover that virtually every possible doctrine that has to deal with what we would consider justification by faith is covered in those sermons that those early disciples preach. But one of the most wonderful things of the Acts of the Apostles is the key verse. And I don't want us to try to dwell upon this verse, but it's a verse that helps us to understand what this wonderful book is about.

Because if you remember, in chapter 1, verse number 8, the Lord Jesus turned to His disciples and He said to them, You shall receive power when My Spirit will come upon you. And He said, You shall become witnesses unto Me. And the word witness is a very significant word because it is the Greek word for martyr.

It is the word martyrio, which means that what Jesus actually said to His disciples, He said, When My Spirit will come upon you, that you will be possessed with such a determination. And you will be possessed with such a boldness and a desire to live for God that in your life there will be a willingness to pay the ultimate price. And that's by laying your life down for the sake of the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

But the Son of God explained to those early disciples the context of this witnessing. And He said to them that when the Spirit of God will come upon them, that the first place that He wanted them to become witnesses was within and around Jerusalem. And the first seven chapters, or we can also say the first seven years, were taken up by witnessing in and around Jerusalem.

And then the Lord Jesus said to them that I want you to take the gospel not only to Jerusalem and then around Jerusalem, but from chapter 8, verse 1 onwards, will you discover that He said to them, I want you

to take the gospel into Judea and up into Samaria. And right through those chapters to chapter 12, will you discover that those early disciples took the gospel of Jesus Christ into Judea, up into Samaria, and they were witnessing for the Lord Jesus wherever they went. In fact, Acts chapter 8, verse 1 is just as important as Acts chapter 1, verse 8. Because the Bible is saying to us that when the persecution was let loose upon the church of the Lord Jesus, that they did not go and hide themselves in different places, but the Word of God said that they were scattered and wherever they went, they were gossiping the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because they were true witnesses for the Savior. Then from chapter 13 on, they became witnesses unto the uppermost parts of the earth for a period of approximately something like 60 years. And my brother and my sister, in about 31 years of history, was the window in church absolutely evangelized for the Lord Jesus.

Now if you study the first seven chapters, you will discover that we are looking upon the establishment of the church. From chapter 8 onwards, we are speaking to one another about the expanding of the church. And from chapter 13 onwards, we are looking upon the extending of the church of the Lord Jesus.

I'm concerned tonight about this concept of the establishment of the church of the Lord Jesus. You see, sometimes we have such an amazing concept of revival. Because we say to ourselves when we study the subject of revival, that we anticipate God when He sends revival, that revival immediately will begin to affect the uppermost parts of the world.

And for seven years, when the revival broke out amongst those early disciples, that God kept them right there within Jerusalem. Because He was in the process of establishing those early followers of the Lord Jesus. So chapter 1 is speaking to us about the days of personal preparation, when the Lord Jesus manifested Himself, when those early disciples for 40 days sat at the feet of the Saviour.

And then the Bible is saying to us from verse number 9 onwards, that He ascended up into the presence of the Father. And they went up into the upper room, and for a period of 10 days, were they waiting upon the promise of the Father. I would like us tonight, in the time that we have available, not to look at those days of personal preparation, but I want us to look at the second aspect of that sounding of the early church, that brings us to what we would look upon as the day of Pentecost.

The day when the Spirit of God came upon those early disciples. And first of all tonight, I want us to look at the importance of the time of the coming of the Spirit of God. You see, if you study the day of Pentecost, and I'm sure you are aware of the fact that the word Pentecost, or the word Pente, stands for 50th, or 50 in the Greek language.

And if you study the day of Pentecost, you will realize that what happened on the day of Pentecost very much corresponds to what happened when God came to the people of Israel on the Mount Zion, when for 11 months and for 13 days, the people of Israel were at the mountain of God, and the will of God was revealed through the law, and the way of God was appointed through the tabernacle, and the will of God was revealed to them through the book of Leviticus. And it was around the 50th day, when suddenly God appeared on the mountain, and God revealed Himself to the people of Israel. And there is a sense in which what happened on the day of Pentecost corresponds to what God did within the Old Testament.

You see, my friends, we are looking at this, and we are considering the time of the visitation of the Spirit of God. And I wonder tonight if you realize that when we are speaking about the time of the visitation of the

Spirit of God, that God is saying to us in His Word, He said to us in Acts chapter 2 that in the last days, God said, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. And He said, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

And He said, your old men shall dream dreams. And my brother and my sister, we are still living in the last days. You see, we are finding ourselves this Tuesday night on one of those last days that God was speaking about, and He was speaking about the time of the visitation of the Spirit of God.

What kind of time is the Word of God speaking to us? Well, it seems to me that it was the time of great confusion in the lives of those early disciples. You see, there were many of those early disciples that when they were following the Lord Jesus, that they never came to the perception of what Christ was trying to say to them, that He was not the political Messiah. He was not someone who was going to bring a sense of deliverance to the Jews.

But right through His ministry, He was trying to communicate to them that in His kingdom, and the fact that He was king, that He was coming to establish a spiritual kingdom in the lives of those early followers of Christ. And I wonder this Tuesday night if you would allow me to suggest to you that somehow it seems to me, my brother and my sister, that there is a time in you and my life that God can come and visit us as His people. You see, when God is speaking to us about the time of the visitation of His Spirit, that He's coming right down to this Tuesday night.

And He's saying to you and me as a believer that there is a time in my life when I want to come and visit you with my Spirit. And I wonder if you realize this evening from God's perspective how absolutely important it is that He has brought you to this conference. My brother and my sister, I would go so far this evening as to suggest to you in this service that you did not come to this service, or rather this conference, simply because you wanted to come, but the Spirit of God has created in your heart a desire to come and be exposed to the Word of God.

And I wonder this evening if you realize that maybe this Tuesday night is one of those times of the visitation of the Spirit of God. And you sit here this evening in this service, and upon your heart is there a sense of confusion. You are one of those who have come to me during the hours of this day, and you have said to me, Gerard, I sense that God is somehow speaking to me through His Word, and God is speaking to me through His Spirit, and there is a stirring in my heart, and I sense that God is saying to me something, and yet I am not sure what God is saying.

I would like to suggest to you tonight that there is a possibility that when God wants to come and visit us, my brother and my sister, that you and I can sit in a service like this, and you and I cannot be aware of the urgency of that. You see, there is the possibility this evening that you and I can sit through session after session, that we can expose ourselves to the Word of God, that we can open our hearts before God's Word, that when the visitation of the Spirit of God comes to my heart as an individual, it is a possibility that I do not realize that. I remember I missed it once in my life.

I was involved in a series of lectures in a theological school in the city of Edinburgh, and during those lectures at that time, it happened so that the Spirit of God began to breathe upon us in those days, and we sensed that God wanted to break through in our hearts, in our lives, and our hearts became so melted and so broken as it were in the presence of God, and we recognized that God was stirring the hearts of people. The Friday morning came, and I gave my lecture, and the president of the school came, and he delivered his lecture, and after that we had a time of prayer, and we sensed that God's Spirit was breathing upon the

meeting. We have moved from the sin, from the spirit of superficiality and fellowship, and asking where you come from, and asking where you are, and asking all these questions, and we came to the place where we became absolutely serious of God, and began to ask ourselves what was the reason for our existence.

God was breathing upon us in an amazing way. And as we had a time of prayer after those lectures that Friday morning, this person prayed, and that person prayed, and I was right in the midst of that, and I had to go to the city of Edinburgh about maybe ten or twelve minutes away, and I sensed that the Spirit of God was stirring the hearts of people, and God was going to break into the lives of men. It happened so that I said to myself, I can't stay any longer, and I slipped out of the meeting.

I got into my little car, and I was driving down to the city of Edinburgh, and I was about ten or twelve minutes away when suddenly God spoke to me. And deep in my heart, the Spirit of God said to me, I have just come. And I remember I was so amazed and so shocked that I turned my little car around, and I went flying back to this theological school, and I stopped in the parking lot, and I ran back into this hall where these people met.

But you see, God has come, and they were dismissed, and everyone was so broken up that they went to their rooms, and they were seeking the face of God on their own. I ran out of that room, and I ran into the main building, into the office of the president of the school, and I will never forget this. I ran into his office, he was sitting behind his desk, and he just looked up, and the tears were streaming down his cheeks, and I stood there in absolute amazement, and I said, Colin, I said, what has happened? He said, Gerard, he said, God has come.

I said, when? He said, five minutes after you left. Oh, my brother and my sister, I was right part of it up to that morning, but at the very end, I missed it. And I want to rescue tonight, if you would allow me to suggest to you, that maybe you and I do not realize tonight the urgency of each day.

Maybe you and I do not realize tonight the urgency that, the fact that you have traveled a thousand miles, or that you've spent seven hours in a plane, or maybe the fact that you just live around the corner, and we say to ourselves, maybe we are just coming to another set, a series of meetings. God said, it's the time of my visitation. You say, what was this time of my visitation? It was a time of deep humiliation before God.

Oh, my brother and my sister, when God comes to us in His Spirit, you know what happens to us? You feel that the way that I felt tonight prior to this service, I felt too ashamed to find myself crawling into this pulpit. You see, when God wants to come and visit after His Spirit, it becomes a time of great humiliation in the presence of God. You and I begin to see ourselves the way that God is looking at us.

God comes to our hearts, and He takes a scale from our eyes, and He takes a mark from our faces, and He looks at me and He says, How are you and your relationship of your wife? And how is it with your children? And how is it there in the quiet moments of your life? It becomes a time of deep humiliation before God. You see, what is God's Word saying to us? God is saying to us, If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, God said, then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land. Now, my brethren, my sisters, it is not enough for us to gather like this, and in an evening like this.

It is not enough for us to spend time together in prayer, and say to one another, We have got a sense of expectation in our hearts to God. It becomes a time of great humiliation. It becomes a time of great

self-searching before God.

You see, I think it is possible this Tuesday night that you are sitting in our Tuesday night service, and there is some unresolved issue in your life. There is maybe someone somewhere this evening in your background, in your past, or maybe even since you have become a believer and a follower of Christ, and God is saying to you, You have done something towards that person. Maybe it is a pastor.

Maybe it is a fellow believer. Maybe it is an unconverted person. And God said, It is time to visit you.

I remember I was in the city of Intercontinental Africa, and a friend of mine was a minister in the large Dutch Reformed Church. It was an evangelical church in that town. Incidentally, a few of them.

And it happened so that this Sunday morning, he was preaching in his church, and he was preaching from Matthew chapter 6, and the title of his sermon, or rather the key verse, that he was dealing with was Matthew chapter 6, where the Bible says, If you do not forgive, God said, I cannot forgive. And in that service, there was a man that Sunday, that second. He was a follower, a believer of Lord Jesus.

He was born of the Spirit of God, but he had something between him and his brother. And as he sat in that service that morning, the Spirit of God came and spoke to his heart, and said, John, you cannot go on like this. He left the service that morning.

He went to his home, because God spoke to him, and he got on his knees before God. And when he got on his knees before God, there was a moment as he got on his knees before God, and he said, God, I want to forgive my brother. I want to... Your Word says you will not forgive if I do not forgive.

My friend, the minister, did not know this. In the following Sunday, the text of his sermon, or the title of his sermon, was Matthew chapter 5, where Jesus said, If you bring your gift to the altar, and it reminds you that your brother has got all against you, you should leave your gift at the altar, and go and reconcile yourself with your brother. My friend said, I did not know what was happening, but this man just jumped up, and he stormed out of his service that morning.

And he walked out of that service, and he said, I will never ever come back to this church ever again. And he said, three months later, it happened so that a phone call came from the Grotoskir Hospital in the city of Cape Town, and on the other side of the phone was the voice of a surgeon who said to this man, his brother, Listen, if you want to see your brother alive, he has been involved in an accident, he is dying. He said, if you want to see him alive, you need to come down right now.

He rushed down to the airport and got the next plane. And the plane took him right down into the city of Cape Town, and the airport, and there was an ambulance waiting for him. And they rushed him into the ambulance, and the ambulance and the sirens went on their way to the hospital because his brother was dying.

And as they brought him into the hospital, they rushed him to that room, and the intensive care, and as he ran into that room, there was his sister, and she didn't know he was his brother, and she had a white sheet, and she just put it over the body. She just swung around, and she said, Sir, I'm sorry, you're just one minute too late. That man flew his arms into the air, and he began to run down those corridors to that hospital and scream at the top of his voice, God, I'm one minute too late to reconcile myself with my brother.

I wonder this Tuesday night if you would allow me to ask you, oh, my brother, my sister, I've been long enough in the ministry of the Word of God to realize that as we sit in this Tuesday night service, that there are some unresolved issues in our hearts as the people of God. Oh, maybe you sit here tonight, and there was a time that you were part of this very charity Christian fellowship, and in your heart you feel, someone has done something towards me. Deep in your heart you are sitting with an unforgiving spirit.

Maybe you sit here tonight, and God said it's the time of your visitation because there has been a time that I have brought people across your path. And God said, yes, I brought these people across your path, and you knew me as your Savior, and they were lost. They were on their way to a lost eternity.

And God said, I spoke to your heart, and I said, I want you to share within the gospel. And somehow those people just slipped through our fingers, and you and I one day need to stand before God, and God is going to say to us, I can see blood on your hands, the blood of those that I brought across your path. A friend of mine who is a minister in my own homeland told me of an incident of the nurse who came into his vestry on a Sunday night after the evening service, and as she came into his vestry, he said, I look into her eyes, and under her eyes I saw that dark blue, black mark.

And he said, as I look in her face, I knew she was a believer. In fact, she was a member of his church. He said, we sat down, and as I began to talk to her, I said to her, what is wrong? And she said, Pastor, last week I was in the hospital.

I'm a nurse. And she said, the man was involved in an accident, and somehow, Pastor, it happened that we heard the ambulance coming, and the doors opened, and they brought this man down on this trolley, and they were pushing him on their way to the emergency surgery. And as they brought this man in, she said, I saw him in the distance.

She said, he was covered with blood. He was dying. And she said, as he was coming towards me, I had to stand like this, and he was screaming and saying, is there someone who can help me to thank God? He said, I'm dying.

She said, as they brought him closer and closer, I looked upon the rich man, and he was a bloody mess. She said, his one eye was gone. His face was covered with blood.

He was dying. But through the one eye he saw me, and he grabbed me like this, and he said, Nurse, I'm dying. Can you help me to thank God? She said, I took my hand away, because I didn't know what to say.

And I wonder this evening if it's the time of God's recitation for the souls that God has brought across our path. I think of some of those wonderful biblical passages that he's speaking to us about the visitation of God. Oh, you remember, for instance, in the life of Isaiah the prophet.

You remember what the prophet Isaiah said? He said, the year when King Isaiah died, he said, I also saw the Lord. He was the chaplain to the king. He was a popular man.

He was very well accepted. He had wonderful words to the king. But suddenly there was a moment when the king died, and he said, the year when King Isaiah died, he said, I also saw the Lord.

Who did he see? He saw the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, why did he say that? Because John and John chapter 12 referred to Isaiah, and he said, he saw the Lord Jesus. And he said, I saw the Lord.

He was high and lifted up, and his grains saw the temple. And he said, there were those serpents. And what did they say? They said in the Hebrew language, quadesh, quadesh, quadesh, is the Lord God Almighty.

He stopped. And what did he say? He said, woe to me. He said, I'm a man of unclean lips, and I'm dwelling amongst the people of unclean lips.

You see, five times prior to that, my brother and my sister, he cast out those woes against the people. But suddenly the time of God's visitation has come. You know what's the greatest fear in my heart this evening? And I know this is only Tuesday night, and we've got three wonderful days to go.

And yet my brother and my sister, I was possessed this afternoon of a conviction as I was pouring my soul out in the barn of the Kennistons. And I walk out of that barn, and I thought, I wish I could change the name of that barn and call it Bethel in the days to come. But I was possessed of the conviction in my heart that God is not going to pass His day by this day.

And maybe you sit here this evening, you say, Gerard, I can't really say that I've come to meet you of God. I've come because there is a hunger in my heart, and there is a desire after the things of God, and yet I can't say that I've really come in my heart so that I would be able to meet you of God. I would like to suggest to you this Tuesday evening that I think that there is the possibility that you and I as a believer would come to the place where God can transform our lives to such a degree, my brother and my sister, that we go back to the places where we come from absolutely different.

You say, why do you say that? Simply because it's the time of the visitation of God. A.W. Tozer made an amazing statement, and this is what he said. He said, The sight of God when He appears in awesome majesty to the wandering eyes of the soul will bring the worshipper to his knees with fear and with gladness to fill him with such an overwhelming sense of divine greatness that he must spontaneously cry that God alone is great.

It becomes a time of absolute honesty before God. I wonder this evening if you would allow me to suggest to you that my brother and my sister, it is absolutely impossible for you and for me as a believer to become absolutely honest in the presence of God without the Holy Spirit. And you see, so many times, you and I have quote Revelation 3 when the Bible is saying to us, You and I stand at your door, at the door and I knock.

He said, If any man is hearing my voice coming, he said, I will come in. My brother and my sister, that word is for the people of God. And I wonder this evening if God the Holy Spirit is standing at the door of your heart and He's been knocking for months, and He's been saying, I want to do something in your life.

I want to transform your relationship with God. And you close the door. And I have met many, many people who have closed the door because they've been so hurt in the past that they're not willing to trust anyone.

It becomes a time of absolute honesty before God. You've seen the miracles that the Lord Jesus has done in the Gospels and every one of those miracles, or majority of them I should say, whenever He came to a person and He was going to do a miracle, He wanted to respond from the heart of that person. And a number of times He turned to them and He said, What would you have? What would you want Me to do for you? And they were absolutely honest what they want God to do for them.

And I wonder this Tuesday night, my brother and my sister, if you would allow me to ask you on this service tonight, what is there that you long for God to do in your heart? Maybe you sit here this evening as a husband or as a young single man and in the realm of your mind there are some evil thoughts that are coming in there. And there are times that you are so possessed with it. And there are times that you are so taken by it that you wonder if you know Jesus as your Saviour.

And He turned to you and He said, What would you want Him to do for you? Or maybe it happens so this evening that there is something that has happened and God said, I want you to go and straighten that thing out. I remember at a conference in my own homeland of Africa where a man came to see God year after year at the meetings. And he came to respond to the altar and he would shed many a tear.

We were trying to counsel him and he confessed to be a believer. And one day, I was able to sit down with him and we got right down to the bottom of the problem. And I said, What is really wrong? And he began to open up and I was able to dig in deeper and deeper and deeper.

And oh, eventually it came to the surface. And he said, Gerard, about 27 years ago, he said, I had a little black African servant on my farm. He said, We were far away from the law.

We were out in the boonies of Dutchess Africa. And he said, One morning he said he did something wrong. And he said, I lost my temper.

And before I knew what I did, he said, I went for that little African boy. And he said, Before I knew what I did, I killed him. And he said, Because we were far away from the law, no one would have known about it.

He said, I was able to find an old ant hill as you find them in Africa. And the foxes make holes in those ant hills. And he said, I found one of those and I dumped the body in there.

And he said, I cover it up. And he said, He said, Gerard, no one has ever known about this. But for the last 27 years, every time when I want to see God, he said, I saw the little African boy standing in front of me.

It became the time of God's solicitation. One of my great concerns about our service tonight, he said, I think there are many of us. I think of these precious men.

And listen, my brethren, you are absolutely vital for God. You are not just some little individual that is floating around in some kind of a conference. But you are absolutely vital for God.

And your lives are so precious to God that you dare not mess around with sin. And I wonder tonight if you would allow me to challenge you. Are you going to go through meeting after meeting and you are not going to meet with God? Are you not going to allow that so precious, so wonderful voice of the Spirit of God who has come by and passed by and said, I want to break you and I want to come to your life and I want to turn your life around.

I don't want you to be like one of those bears in the Yellowstone Park who are sitting alongside the road and they are waiting for food. And when you ask those rangers and say, Why is it that you are shooting them every year? They will say, Sir, they've lost the reason for their existence. And I wonder tonight those of us who are mothers in this service.

You sit here with maybe five or seven or nine beautiful children. Then I ask you tonight as a mother, have you lost the reason for your existence? Do you realize tonight that God just didn't create you to be the wife

of your husband and the mother of those beautiful children? Oh, some of these little children and running around and some of these little girls with their little hiccups and something in those two little canisters. I mean, you know, I just feel if I can sometimes grab them in my arms and take them into my room and say, Can I just have you in my room for an hour just to listen to what Jesus means to you? What is the reason for your existence as a mother? It's not just the wife of my husband or the mother of my children.

And as I bring them up in the admonition and the fear of God, Oh no, my sister, you mean far more to God than that. You say, Pastor, are you saying to me tonight that that's not important? I'm saying to you that that's your birth responsibility. That's the call of God upon your life.

But except for that, there is a desire in your heart that God wants you to become a woman of prayer. And I wonder tonight if it's the time of this recitation to your heart. I think I shared with the church on Sunday morning, if I remember correctly, how God met with me in December in a fresh and a new way my relationship with God.

And one of the first things which happened is that God gave me a fresh and a wonderful burden for my wife to pray for her, more than I prayed. And I prayed for my wife every day. Oh, I trust that you are a husband here tonight that every day, and I trust that you've got a private prayer love.

I mean, if you don't have a private prayer love, you're pretty dead in the water. I mean, you really need God to quicken your heart. But they're in routine praying.

You pray for your wife. And I began to pray for Janice and said, God, I just want you to do a deeper work in her heart. And I prayed for about three weeks or so, and I was away at a conference and phone her the Saturday night and just say, Mommy, how are you doing? I just want to tell you that I love you.

And she was sobbing on the other side of the phone. And I said, what's wrong? She said, I've been weeping all day. And I said, is there anything wrong? And she said, no.

She said, God is doing a deeper work in my heart. I've never had a problem on my heart to love my wife if I really love God. And my brethren, the more time I spend in the presence of God, the more I appreciate my wife.

And if you sit here tonight and you've lost an appreciation for your wife, it's because you've lost the vision of God. God needs to come and take a scale of some of your eyes. And you say, oh, Gerard, she doesn't look the way that she looked today when I married her.

That's maybe your fault. That she has lost respect for herself or if she has lost confidence or if she's insignificant and small. The only one to blame, my brothers, is yourself.

And I've got a vision in my heart of men this week who are at this time together at this conference who's going to go back to their homes and their wives and their children utterly and totally transformed. I'm praying for you. And I mean, if you're not going to obey God, there's others that are praying and I think you're going to be in trouble.

But I'm praying that God will break every heart of every man. God will show you how precious your children are. You say, Gerard, I don't see that.

You know why? Because you have no vision of God. My brother, your perception of the character of God is going to determine how you're going to live with Jesus Christ. Maybe God is speaking to you at this very point and say, there's some things that need to be sorted out there and you better get alone with me and seek my faith.

It's maybe going to mean that you need to phone her tonight after the service. And maybe for the first time in five years you're going to say, my darling again. And God said, it's the time of my recitation.

It's the time of deep brokenness when He comes to us. I often say to myself, I mean, there was probably a time that I was just like that because of my German background. I mean, I'm German and French and man alive, if you're German and French, you really need God, you know.

I mean, if there are two trinities, you need both of them. But I often say to myself, why is it that it's so difficult for us as men really to be broken before God? I just wonder tonight how many of our wives are on their knees this evening seeking the face of God and say, I want Papa to come back different, Lord Jesus. You sit here in this meeting, you're just holding back.

And you say, no, it's not going to happen. Maybe it's not necessary. It's the time of brokenness, you see.

Secondly, what is the place and the importance of the place? There was the importance of the time the Bible is saying to us when the day of Pentecost was fully come. What was the day of Pentecost? It was the Feast of Pentecost. They were three feasts and the Acts of the Apostles.

But it goes further, you see. There was the importance of the place. And my brother and sister, what is the Bible saying to us? The Bible is saying to us when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all accord and one accord in one place.

I wonder tonight if you would allow me to suggest to you that my brother and my sister, our experiences of God do not hang in the air. You see, there is no possibility whatsoever this evening for you and for me to sit in this service tonight and say, well, I know it's this week, it's probably the time of God's visitation to my heart. God somehow is going to come to my life.

But I wonder tonight if you would allow me to suggest to you that our experiences of God does not float around somewhere in the air. My brother and my sister, there is a place where God meets us as His people. What kind of a place is it to those early disciples? It was a place of absolute desperation.

Oh, you remember in John chapter 7 when the Lord Jesus turned to His disciples and what did He say to me? He said, He referred to the Holy Spirit as water and two passages in John's Gospel and in chapter 4, He said to the woman at the well, He said, the water that I will give unto you shall become a spring or a well of water. And I think because she was familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah, He was referring to those wells of salvation in Isaiah chapter 12. But in John chapter 7, the Son of God stood up and what did He say? He said on that last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and He said, and He cried out, He said, if any man thirsts, ah, I wonder this evening if there is a thirsty man.

I wonder tonight if there is a man in this audience who will say, I'm so thirsty for God tonight, I can't go on like this. He said, if any man thirsts, let him come to Me. He that believeth on Me, as good Scripture says, He said, rivers of living water shall continue to flow from the innermost of His being.

My brother and my sister, you know what He speaks of when He's speaking of the sensation of desperation. And the best way that I can illustrate it is from that wonderful context of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament when the Bible is saying to us, ask the deer, pant up after the water. He said, so my soul pant up after God.

And the concept of the Hebrew is giving us the picture of a hunter that has been hunting and he has hunted little deer. And the arrow pierced through the body of this little animal and it's running and it's running. And he knew he's dying and the blood is gushing out.

And the moment when he died, he jumped out and said, He's dead! And he dropped down dead. That's the best way to illustrate it. And I wonder tonight if you would allow me to suggest to you that my brother and my sister, if you and I are full to the Holy Spirit of God, we can't be full to anything else.

And I want to ask you this evening a question that has been burning in my soul today. It's your life's fault of all the fullness of God. If there's some little area in your life tonight and God the Holy Spirit has said, It's time.

It's the place of my visitation. It's time that you surrender, that you maybe sit here as a father. And you know what happened with so many of us? God gave us wonderful, beautiful children, my brother and my sister.

And we pray for those children and we see them coming to Christ and then they come to a summer Bible school or they go to a missionary conference. And they sit there and the Spirit of God speaks to them. And God said, I want you to go to the mission field.

And they are so excited about it and they run back home and they run into the arms of mommy and daddy and say, Mommy and daddy, God has called me to the mission field. I'm on my way one of these days. I'm going to study.

I will be ready for the rest of my life. And then the battle starts in our heart, especially when you've got only one child. And God said, I want you to let go.

I wonder tonight if you sit here as a mother or as a father and God has been talking to one of your children and the Holy Spirit of God has been saying to that child, I want you to go to Africa. And you as a mother and a father, you've had a struggle and you've not given it over to God. And maybe you sit here tonight as a young person or someone else and you sit here in the service and you've been struggling with the call of God.

And in your heart is there a desire and is there a longing? And you say, I want God and yet I'm missing it. And I wonder this evening if you would allow me to suggest to you, my brother, my sister, because I think it is quite possible that there is someone tonight in our midst and you've never been converted and you sit here in this service and from God's perspective, you're absolutely lost. And as you sit in the presence of God and you say to yourself, you've come to this church, maybe you've been here a Sunday or maybe you just came as a visitor or maybe you're from a Mennonite or an Amish background or whatever background.

And you say, there is the fear of God in my heart. And you say, I've got a respect for God and yet you know what the Bible is saying to us? The Bible is saying to us the wages of sin is death. Oh, my friends, there are going to be many people one day who are standing in the eternity of absolute hell and as they

stand there, they will say, God, I knew your words from cover to cover.

And he would turn to me and he said, I never knew you. I was involved in a series of services in the islands of Tiree and the islands of Scotland. And in 1953, two of our faith mission evangelists of the name of Morrison and Wilson went to the island.

In the fall of 1953, they preached the gospel of the Lord Jesus for three months. They had a service every single night of the week except for a Saturday night and during those three months of services, three people came to the meeting. Every day they prayed.

They saturated and soaked themselves in prayer. They visited the houses of those islanders and the highlanders and they preached the word of God. And those three months, three people came to the services.

Christmas time came and they went back to the mainland of Scotland. In the beginning of 1954, they went back to the island of Tiree, a population of about 783 or 5 people. They started with that meeting again.

And do you know what happened, my brother and sister? In the very first week of the month of January when they began to preach, the Spirit of God swept into the island of Tiree and within a matter of days and within a matter of a week or ten days, they had up to 750 people in the services as the Spirit of God was breathing upon the island and as God was pouring out His Spirit and as it was happening, there were hundreds of people that were converted. I went to the island of Tiree in 1982 and for eight solid weeks, I preached the word of God for every night except for a Saturday night. And I visited people in the island and I came to knock at the door of the house and those islanders are very shy and they are very reserved and I knocked at the door of his house and sometimes you visit him three or four times and you pray with him before you can ask him where they are with God because they are so close.

I knocked at the door of his house and a lady invited me in and I said, Madam, can I see your husband? And she turned to me and she said to me, My husband, my husband is not well. He is in death. And I said, Would you allow me to go into his room and pray with him? She took me into the room of this man that was lying in death and the moment I began to talk to this man, I suddenly realized that his heart was wide open for God and he was highlighted and I said, I don't understand it.

These people are so close and these people are so difficult. They are so shy and yet this man was so eager to hear about God and I very carefully began to share the gospel and I poured my heart out and for about an hour I shared with him God's plan of salvation and the tears were streaming down his cheeks and I said to myself, This is the first time that God is giving us a soul. And there was a moment that I turned to him and I said to him, Sir, I said, Don't you think this is the time that God has planned for you to come to Him? This man just looked me up with tears in his eyes and he just dropped his head and he said, No.

And I was absolutely taken aback and I couldn't understand what was going on and he just dropped his head and I said, Will you tell me why you say that? And for a few minutes he was very, very silent and I realized that there is something going on here and I said, Sir, will you please tell me? And he turned to me and he said, Young man, He said, It was 1953 when God poured out His Spirit upon this island. He said, This island was saturated to the presence of God and he said, I was under conviction for days and for weeks and he said, God convicted me and I knew I had to be converted but he said, There was the dance and he said, I didn't want to give up the dance. He said, I loved it so much and he said, For days, he said, I

wrestled and I struggled and he said, I was fighting against it.

And I said, What happened? And he left himself up in his bed and he sat up and he got himself together and he said, Do you see that window? He said, It was a moonlight night in the midst of the revival when I stood in front of that window and he said, The battle was raging for my soul. And suddenly he said, There was a moment that I point my finger to God and he said, As I point my finger to God, he said, I shouted and I said, God, he said, I want you to take this conviction away from me. He said, It went.

He dropped his head and he began to scream at the top of his voice like an insane man. He said, Will you leave my room and never ever come back again? Time has come. The harvest is gone.

And he wasn't sane. Can I tell you something? And it will scare the light out of you because he did it to me. In the midst of the revival amongst the Zulu people, one of the German missionaries, the Spirit of God began to deal with him three years into the revival about something in his life.

God said to him, I want you to lay it on the altar. God said, I want you to give it up. But he was holding back and he was holding back.

And one morning, he stood up in a prayer meeting at Kwasi Sabantu in Mapumuli and he prayed the normal prayer as he prayed every day. And suddenly, he stopped in the middle of his prayer. And as he stopped in the middle of his prayer, he said, God, there is something that is piercing me.

There is something that is piercing me. And the first time that he said it, he dropped down dead. It happened 12 years ago and they carried him out.

I want to be absolutely honest with you. I'm very scared of revival. Oh, he said, Gerard, don't you want to see God sending revival? I long for revival.

I mean, you should have come into this ministry tonight prior to this service. And we were sobbing our hearts out for every soul that came into this service tonight. We were crying to God and our tears, our eyes were full of tears.

And we said, God, we just long for You to come. My brother and my sister, I want to throw my hands in the air and say to God tonight, God, I don't know what is keeping you back. But oh, my brother and my sister, we think about revival and we say, oh, it's going to be wonderful when the Spirit of God comes and revival is going to be tremendous.

I want to tell you tonight, my brother and my sister, I'm afraid of revival because the judgment of God is going to fall upon its people. Oh, you're going to walk down the road where you left some out here in this area and you're going to see your neighbor with his little horse and buggy come out and a man that maybe treated you like a dog and you looked upon him and you thought, oh, he's just a piece of rubbish. I mean, why should I bother about him? Why should I be concerned about him? And you've never bothered him.

You see, of course, he doesn't want anything to do with God. And God says, when My judgment is going to fall upon your life, you're going to turn around and you're going to crawl into his driveway. And you're going to stand on your knees and knock at the door.

And you will hope and pray to God that He will open the door. And as He opened the door, He would say, I just want to tell you that I'm sorry. And that's the only way that God is going to speak to you, the place of

the dissipation of the Spirit of God.

Oh, I love that passage in 1 Kings chapter 18. Oh, can I tell you tonight, it breaks my heart every time when I saw the prophet Elijah restoring the altar of God. When I saw that he gave Satan all the right that he wants through those prophets of Baal to try and prove that their God was alive.

And eventually, they realized, listen, it was a waste of time. And do you know what happened? There was a moment, and do you know what the Bible says? It was the time, the evening, at the evening, the time of the evening sacrifice. After Elijah poured all the water upon the altar, after he had laid those bullets upon the altar, but he turned to God and he prayed a prayer that lasted about 37 words, if I remember correctly.

But he just prayed and he said, God, will you just prove to us that you are God? And the Bible says, and the fire of God fell upon the altar. Oh, my brother, my sister, I wonder what will happen this evening. The fire of God will fall upon us.

God's fire will come to descend upon your life. And the conviction of the Spirit of God will come. And little things that you sit here today, and it's been bothering you, and you wonder about it, and you sit here and you say, I'm not sure how serious I am about these little things.

But suddenly the Holy Spirit of God comes and says, hey, that's really bad stuff, you know. God convicts us. You see, I think our problem tonight is we don't realize what is at stake.

We don't realize what is at stake. I think of the people that sit here tonight who go to charity Christian fellowship. My brother and my sister, would you allow me to ask you, can you imagine what will happen if God sends revival to this place? I spoke to a friend of mine this morning who's an evangelist.

And I said, Harold, will you just pray for me? And he said, yes, I am. And he said, Gerard, he said, I think it is in the 60s or in the 70s. He said, there was a Mennonite evangelist that came into this area.

So I think he said to the 10th or something. And he said, the Spirit, it seems that the Spirit of God was at work. And I put the phone down and I sat down and I said, Lord, aren't you the same in 1996? Can't you do the same in our hearts? Why is it that there is such a lack of conviction? Why is it there are so many of God's people and we are so anxious to say about the sinner? And the sinner, we say to him, the Holy Spirit comes and what does he do? He convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

And my brother and my sister, we condemn sin in the life of the unbeliever, but we condone it in our hearts as the people of God. Place of the visitation of the Spirit of God. It's a place of confession.

I was in a service some time ago out in Western Canada where God broke into this very conservative church on a Wednesday night and the whole congregation was on their faces before God. First time ever in the history of a church that the whole church were on their knees and their faces before God. You say, who was first in his face before God? Moreno guy, me.

I got so broken up in the pulpit that I said, oh, I'm finished with you. I'm just here speaking God. And when I said that, God got a hold of them.

And at the end of that time, many people began to put things right that for 25 years that they were people that hardly talked to one another. Oh, of course, they just say maybe a little smile, but all in their hearts, I tell you, it was just desperate stuff. And I remember there was a man that came to the front and he got

hold of the mic like this and he looked to an elderly man at about 72 years old who sat in the back of the church and he said, I've got something to put right tonight here in public.

And it was a very well-known man in the town who was highly respected and he turned to that elderly man and he turned to him and he said, you know, about 70 years ago, he said, I did something to you. And he said, what I did to you 70 years ago, he said, it almost caused you to become bankrupt and you knew it was me. He said, tonight I want to ask you publicly that you please will forgive me.

Will you please forgive me, my brother? And I was sitting behind the pulpit watching this amazing scene and I saw the old man there and the moment when he pointed, I saw the old man just crumble and crumble. Poor old insignificant man. And he just said, will you please forgive me, please forgive me.

And he crumbled and then he couldn't hold it anymore and he just jumped up and he came leaping around, leaping around and ran into his arms. And he said, my brother, you're forgiven. Maybe sat here tonight as a father in the service and your mother and your father has done some things to you.

Maybe you've lost, you've lost everything. You gave your heart to God and you lost the farm because you became a believer and you have forgiven your mother and your father. But you're carrying the hurt and God said, you need to come.

You need to meet with me and you need to seek my face. But maybe you just sit here tonight and God said, I just want to break your heart. This is the place for me to do it.

You sit here and you say, as someone said to me, Gerard is a rock. I don't know what to do about this rock. God said, you need to give it over because I want to break the rock.

Condone sin in my own life. It's the place. It's a place of cleansing.

I don't know if you have it in your hymn book. Maybe you do that, have that great hymn that we sometimes sing. Oh, now I see the cleansing stream, the fountain open deep and wide.

I plunge, I plunge. Do you know what the Bible is saying to us tonight, my brother and my sister? The Bible is saying to us that a fountain has been opened. For what? For the sins of the people of God.

I've been in churches in my insignificant ministry where the Spirit of God came and I don't understand how it worked and how to explain it. But the Spirit of God almost came from one corner of the church and just swept through the lives of men and women. And it was like a cleansing fire that went through.

And as that cleansing fire went through, every heart was consumed and cleansed by the cleansing fire of God. My time is gone. And I just give you my last point.

There was the importance of the place to meet with God. There was the importance of the time to meet with God. You see these men going, there are many others of you that are sitting here in your seat.

And Satan is trying to hold you at this seat and you'd better go and see God. There was the importance of the time to seek the face of God. And as you go to the prayer room, you're going to stay there until you get through to God.

Even if you stay there till five o'clock tomorrow morning. There was the importance of the time. There was the importance of the place.

But I wonder tonight, my brother and my sister, if you would allow me to suggest to you that there was the importance of the people. There are people coming, we're going to wait for you. Maybe there are some of our mothers tonight.

Maybe you need to give a baby to someone else or maybe you need to go and spend some time alone with God. I'm sure there's a prayer room for the mothers or for the ladies. There was the importance of the people.

You need one another, you know. I don't want you to sit here tonight in this service and you see how it's going and you sit there and you sit yourself. I wonder if I should really go and see God.

Brother Denny, I want you to go down and make sure that they stay there until they get through to God. We don't want people to come up if they haven't got through to God. You sit here this evening and you say, I don't know if I should go and see God.

There was the importance of the people. I think it's time for us to seek God, you know. I'm going to ask you, if you want to go into the prayer rooms, I want you to go.

Those who are not going to go to the prayer rooms, they're going to get on our knees before God and spend some time before us. Before you get on your knees before God, let people first go to the prayer room. The prayer room is full, brethren.

Then find some other room, the downstairs where we have supper in the evenings. Find some place there, just some place alone where you can go and seek the face of God. Is there anyone else you would like to go? This is a time of great honesty and openness before God.

I just wonder what would happen if every one of those men, that are down in the prayer room, and every one of those of us, of the wives and the mothers, will get through to God tonight. I wonder what will happen to this district and the places where you've come from. Is there anyone else that wants to go? Because we're going to pray.

Do you need to go down and find someone that you need to ask for goodness? Someone who just walked out is looking for someone to ask for goodness and probably will find the person down there. Don't go down because we don't have any more room. Those of us who are here tonight, I'm going to ask you to seek God.

And I'm going to ask you to turn around and on your knees. And if you want to pray out loud, you pray out loud. I don't care if 50 or 100 people are praying together tonight at the same time.

We want you to seek God. Okay, we're going to do that at the end, but we're going to pray now, okay? We would like you, if you want to pray out loud tonight, you do that. You won't hear other people praying, but you just seek God for your own needs.

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