

Dry Land

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the need for repentance and revival in the church and society, and highlights the consequences of not seeking God's transformation.

Duration: 46:33

Scripture: Psalm 107:33, Hosea 5:6, Hosea 5:13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes the reality of the brokenness and sinfulness in society. He talks about the various problems that exist in people's lives, such as domestic violence, promiscuity, and drug dealing. The preacher emphasizes that God is calling for radical change and urges the listeners to break off unhealthy relationships and stop engaging in sinful behaviors. He also highlights the importance of taking action and reaching out to the lost and suffering, just as William Booth did when he founded the Salvation Army. The preacher references Psalm 107 and Hosea to illustrate God's perspective on the wickedness in the world and the need for the church to respond with passion and action.

Transcript

For more messages by Glenn Meldrum and his Presence Ministries, go to www.ihpministry.com. You are welcome to make additional copies of this CD for free distribution. Psalm 107, beginning in verse 33, he referring to the Lord, he turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, and a fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who live there. The analogy that God speaks of in this situation is, he says, I see this area as a desert, as dry ground.

And as I prayed for Inkster, and I don't say that just because I'm here, I've genuinely prayed for Inkster. I have sought God in tears for this city, and that God would move, and that God would genuinely send revival. But as I pray, I see something, and what I see is a desert.

What we have to look at is that there was a time where the land was fruitful, where God walked the earth with Adam and Eve, and it was a beautiful plush paradise. How big that paradise was, I don't know, but because of the fall of man, is ultimately that paradise was put into a little spot, and the rest of the earth was cursed, in essence, because of the breaking of the covenant that Adam did with God. And so the land was cursed.

It didn't anymore bring forth just abundant fruit. What brought forth had to come through struggle, and through pain, and through turmoil, not through ease anymore. And eventually the flood destroyed the garden.

Before the flood came, it was still there. It had to be interesting. You know, you find the wickedness of Noah's day.

Throughout Noah's day, the garden of paradise was still there. You know, they could have walked up to it, and they could have seen the angels that guarded the entrance to it. A testimony to who God was.

What do they do? They fall in the wickedness. They reject the living God, and ultimately the garden is destroyed from the flood. But why did the land become a desert? It's because of the wickedness of the people.

And so, really, that's what we need to look at. We need to be able to look at Inkster. And I'm referring to Inkster because you're an Inkster.

I mean, I passed it for almost 12 years in Detroit. We could say the same for Detroit. We could say it for Birmingham.

We could say it for anywhere in this world. When we look at it spiritually, spiritually it is a wasteland. And I want to relate to something that is very, very difficult, because ultimately the wasteland came upon planet earth because of the sin of Adam.

But I will be very bold to say that the wasteland that surrounds us now is the sin of the church. No other reason behind it. We're in a desert because of the sin of the church.

Because Jesus went and said that when he would send the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit would dwell within us, and not just dwell within us, but that he would become as a river of living water that would flow from us, flow out of us. And what's the purpose of that river? To go forth in the dry ground and to bring life where there was no life. But what happens in desert? And we might get a little sprinkling in the desert.

Does it change anything? I mean, the ground just sucks it right up because it's so dry, it's so barren. And so we have our little Christian things we do, little sprinkling, but it makes no difference. It changes nothing of great consequence around us because we don't need a sprinkling, we need a flood.

We need it to the point where the ground just doesn't get a little wet, but it becomes saturated so that it flows over and it starts bringing forth buds and crops and so on so that it's able to feed the people and care for the people. As long as the church is without that living water, it's just sprinkling, that's all it is. When you read the accounts of the revivals of the first great awakening with Jonathan Edwards, he did a lot of writing on the revivals.

He begins one of his books that he wrote where he speaks of religion that people became so sick of it, so tired of it. The deadness, the formalism, the same thing. No life, no vibrancy, just ritual and form.

It's part of the desert. I mean, that you go to church and it's dry, it's dead, that there's nothing that's there, nothing that speaks, nothing that transforms and changes life. I mean, you can go to Kingdom Hall and you can have an individual stop doing drugs because Kingdom Hall will put pressure on the people, which is good, glad they stopped doing drugs, but that really doesn't change the person.

I mean, you can go to church and you can just be a good person, doesn't change the individual. It's not until God supernaturally comes into the life and they allow God to do it that they become transformed and that a river of living water flows through them. When was the last time you mourned before God because in Inkster you haven't seen the dead raise? When was the last time you mourned because the church in America cannot go and walk along the road and see a lame man and says, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk? Because the church is destitute.

That's tough for us to hear. We don't want to hear it because what we like is messages that tell us we're good, we're fine. Well, I could be a false prophet to you and I could come and speak peace.

Oh, God loves you. He wants to do work in your life. Oh, it's so, so great, which is true.

He wants to do work in your life. But there's another aspect that we like to reject in a mushy love gospel. I don't believe you get that from pastor.

I believe pastor tells it as what it is. But sometimes you need to hear an evangelist that might say the same identical thing that pastor's been saying for months and months. And it just comes from a different voice.

And all of a sudden you go and say, well, God, you're trying to speak to me. But first we have to begin to look and see where is the church? Where is the city? If we don't begin to grasp where it's at, then we just go along in the same old thing, doing the same old things that we've been doing, the same old lifestyle, no burden, no desire, no seeking for change. Until we begin to grasp what is really out there, what's really going on, then it doesn't bother us.

It wasn't until William Booth was on a train and got a vision from God that God really seized hold of him to start reaching out to the poor and the destitute. And ultimately Salvation Army was birthed out of it. And then he saw a sea of humanity perishing under the violent judgment of God and the church standing idly by in their comfort, in their contentment and doing nothing about it.

And so humanity was dying in the sea while the church was in his comfort. God doesn't call us to comfort. He calls us to action.

When you look at the call upon the apostles, it wasn't to the aspect of prosperity, it was the aspect of passion. Of reaching out to a lost and dying world. I want you to turn to Hosea, book of Hosea.

Hosea, I'll tell you what, it's a tough book. I think it's one of the toughest books in the Bible. It is a tough book.

God says some tough things. Israel had to come to a terrible place in God for Hosea to come. God didn't want to send a Hosea.

He didn't want the message of Hosea to come to the people because it is a scary, terrifying message. A terrifying message. And so they had to fall a long ways from where God wanted them to be.

They had to veer off the path that God wanted them and be away from it for a long time and to ignore the cries of other prophets that he sent that didn't speak a message quite as hard and quite as difficult and quite as point blank. Hosea is in your face, basically what we can look at. He was a prophet that was in their face, said it plain and simple, nothing disguised or anything else.

Just before them, this is the truth. This is where you are. This is what's going to happen.

And that's hard to take. I'll tell you what, he was one unpopular prophet. One unpopular man.

Because I don't think that message the church likes to hear. Because there again, we like to hear everything's fine. Everything's great.

We're just doing wonderful. Assyria, they're not going to come and overthrow us and take us away into slavery. They're not going to kill our people and the elite of society.

They won't do that. God will protect us because we're in that covenant. But they didn't rely upon God.

They relied upon a promise that God had given, but they weren't living the truth. And so they were actually preparing themselves for judgment. In Hosea, the second chapter, in the first verse, Say to your brothers, my people, and to your sisters, my loved one, rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife and I am not her husband.

Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. Otherwise, I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born. And I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land and slay her with thirst.

I will not show my love to her children because they are children of adultery. Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She says, I will go after my lovers who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen and my oil and drink.

He goes on to speak. And ultimately that he will block the paths of her lovers, but that God was actually the one who gave it. And she attributed it to her lovers.

Who's this wife? Was Israel. And the husband was related to his God. But what does God say here? I'm going to tell you something.

This is a scary, scary, scary verse. And I have another one I'm going to read to you in a second. He was saying, do not call this woman anymore my wife.

God was literally separating himself from the people. So often we think that as individuals we can play with sin. We can play with sin.

We can play with sin. We can keep doing it. And each time we do it, we go and say, forgive me, God.

We play with sin. Forgive me, God. Play with sin.

Forgive me, God. And God's just going to keep doing it. There's going to be a time where God says enough.

You are not mine. You are not mine. I will not tolerate your flirting with sin anymore.

It is over. It is done with. Scary thought.

Now, we don't want to think that because as Pentecostals, we really believe in free will. And so do I believe in free will. But I also have come to a greater understanding of something that the Pentecostal church is less, is the very attributes of who God is, that he is sovereign.

And what it means that he is sovereign is he chooses to do what he does and no person can make him. You can say the name of Jesus a million times and God will not jump. Name Jesus is not some magical term that when we say it, all of a sudden all of heaven comes to attention.

God is God. He gave us that name so we can approach him, not so we can dictate to him, not so he becomes master to us. We are to be slave to him.

Now, that's difficult for us because we want to think that we can just say the name Jesus and all heaven bows to us. But God is sovereign. What if God says, I will not save you? Who is going to argue with him? Who is going to stand before him and says, God, you have to.

I have to. You can tell me, God, that I have to save you. I'm God, I'll choose.

You don't say what arguments you're going to have on the day of judgment for him or if you choose to say, I choose not to save you because you have been so hard. You have continued in your adultery. You have continued in your fornication.

You have continued in your drugs, in your relationships that God abhors. And you say, no big thing. No big thing.

We will just ask forgiveness again and we will go on again. And when we fall and we do it again, God is just a big God of love. And he will once again forgive us.

It will all be well. But here, God says, I am divorcing you. You are not my wife anymore.

If you jump over to the fifth chapter. In the sixth verse, he says, when they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, they will not find him. He has withdrawn himself from them.

They are unfaithful to the Lord. They give birth to illegitimate children. Now their new moon festivals will devour them and their fields.

Hear that. This is scary. They will not find him for he has withdrawn himself from them.

Terrifying thought. Terrifying thought. What we have to ultimately see is what does God ask of us? Not what does society ask of us.

What does God ask of us? What does God say is moral and the right way to live? Not what the world says. The world has standards that God hates. He abhors it.

He has called us to holy living in thought, word, and deed. He has called our bodies to be temples where he dwells in that must be holy. That cannot be associated with drugs, with alcohol, with fornications and adulteries.

That cannot be associated with that which I take into my eyes that is immoral to God. We have TV and videos and movies that we can sit down and watch things that God hates. That he says in scripture that he will have no part of.

And that he says further that those who partake of it will not enter the kingdom of heaven. He says no liar will enter the kingdom of heaven. He says no fornicator, no murderer.

But yet we make that our entertainment. And we think that God doesn't hear. We think that he doesn't see.

We think that he doesn't care. We think that we can just go on and keep saying, oh God, no big deal. I'll go to church this Sunday and raise my hand.

And everything will be fine between you and me. And I'll go back and open the pornography when I go home. Or I'll go watch some filth on television, a dirty sitcom that all it is is sexual jokes.

And no problem, God, because I'll go Sunday and just raise my hand. But he says you can come and you can bring your sacrifices. And he says I will not show up because I will not be there.

Because you have continued in that which I told you not to. And your hands are stained and you have not repented. When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah his sores, then Ephraim turned to Assyria and sent to the great king for help.

But he was not able to cure you, not able to heal your sores. This is a really interesting idea. That's in the 13th verse of the fifth chapter.

It's an interesting idea because what God ends up saying there, he says you came to an understanding that you were sick. That's important. You know, people can see that they're in need today.

They're empty. They're sick of church. They think of all the religion and the deadness and the farm.

They want some kind of life. They want some kind of newness. They can see that.

But what do they do? They dial up the astrologers to get their fortunes read so that they can know what tomorrow is going to bring. Or they're lonely and they're bummed out and they're sick of life. They're sick of the abuse that they get from their husband or from the parents or whatever.

And so they run out, they do some drugs. They know they're sick, but they don't go to the place of healing. And they figure this will solve my problems.

But they continue and they persist in it. But yet all it's doing is making a wasteland. It's making a wasteland out here because it is individuals that make that wasteland.

And if the church is not able because it has no power and it has no spirit that flows through it, it cannot bring life to that wasteland because it becomes part of it. It thinks like it. It acts like it.

All it does is go to church on Sunday. But it's still a part of that wasteland and it is still stained with the blood of it. When you read Daniel and you come to the point of Daniel where it says Daniel read Jeremiah and the Lord opened his understanding to Jeremiah.

And what the understanding was had to do with the 70 weeks and that Israel would be in bondage for 70 years. And it says when Daniel came to that understanding, God revealed that to him, he fell down and mourned and wept before God. And it goes through his prayer, a prayer of repentance.

Daniel was a man of God. And he repented because he saw that the sin of the people also somehow took him and aligned him with that sin. And he repented not just for his own sin, but for the sin of those people he was associated with, the sin that his father's committed.

And that is forefathers before that committed and knew that blood was on his hands because he was part of humanity. And that if God was going to do anything, it had to be rooted in repentance. And in a church

saying, forgive me because I don't have the power to transform this community.

Another program, another idea, another thing that we do, but ultimately the band-aids on cancer because we don't have the power to transform the society. Because that's what revival is. Revival is where God breaks into the church, transforms the church so that the church might break out into the world and transform society.

But you know, if all we're struggling is with the same old sins that we've been struggling with, and we're not free from them, we're not walking holy, we're never going to have anything to give the world. And so you might grow because this church falls apart over here and they come here. But you know, as if you grow because another church collapses, eventually those people leave when a pastor says something they don't like.

And you'll be right back where you were. And so the growth has to come from out of the world, from reaching out to them, seeing them change. People are sick of it.

I mean, drug addicts are sick of it. They just don't know how to get out of it. It's a vicious trap.

I mean, before I was a Christian, I dealt drugs. I was in the whole scene. And you know, I could not imagine ever living outside of it.

I didn't know what was outside of it. My worldview was so narrow, so narrow that all I could see is just every day partying. I could not imagine getting up another day without it.

But yet I hated it. I was lonely. I was miserable.

People are like that, whether they're alcoholics, whether they're prostitutes, whether they're just sleeping with their boyfriend or whatever, they're sick of it. But they don't know how to get out. They feel so trapped.

They feel so cornered and saying, I'd like some freedom. I'd like some life in my life, but I don't know how to obtain it. How do I get it? But yet the church doesn't have the power to bring the deliverance.

And so what we see is brought out in Hosea is that Israel had committed spiritual adultery. It had played the whore by putting its loves on other things, by loving this world, by loving themselves rather than loving God. And you know, idolatry is probably one of the most wicked sins because it distorts and perverts who God is.

And it worships that which shouldn't be worshiped and takes the worst away from that which only should be God himself. Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people, whenever I would heal Israel, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria revealed. They practice deceit.

Thieves break into houses. Bandits rob in the streets, but they do not realize that I remember all their deeds. Their sins engulf them.

They are always before me. Hear the cry of God. When I wanted to restore you, you would not let me because you remained in your sin.

And as a result, I kept track of those sins and those sins engulfed you. They produced a wasteland around you. Desolateness.

Travel in your mind through the streets of the city. And these streets aren't any different than streets throughout this country. But travel through them and through house after house where this man, he beats his wife.

And this one, he's living with this woman. And this is the third or fourth band that she's been with. And the 13-year-old girl is now finding this man coming into her bedroom at night.

Go to the next house and you just find them just blown away, man. They're dealing drugs and one thing. You go from house to house.

There's a little old lady and she's a good woman. But she's lonely as can be because she's never found her true love. You know what I'm saying? House to house to house.

And if you were to look at them through God's eyes, all you would do is see these people that are aching and hurting and dry. Think of it as the aspect as the alcoholic who goes out in the middle of the desert to get a drink. And he takes a glass and he dips it down in the sand and goes and keeps doing it.

And all it's doing is filling his mouth with gravel and never satisfying the thirst. That's what sin is. Sin is a thing that we keep sucking down.

We keep putting in it. But it just makes us thirstier and thirstier and more greedy. It's like a fire.

You have a fire and you throw wood to it and it's never satisfied. That fire will always keep burning. You throw more and more.

It never comes to a point to say, enough wood, enough fire. It'll grab more. The more you throw, the more it'll consume.

Sin just wants to burn within us. I mean, you do a little bit of drugs, you don't want to do more drugs. You do a little bit of alcohol, you don't want to do more alcohol.

You do a little bit of sleep around, you don't want to do more. Because the lusts of the flesh are not satisfied with the things of the flesh. And as long as you keep seeking after it, it's going to make you so empty, so destitute.

There might be a time where sin is a pleasure for a season, but I'll tell you what. It's a snake. And it always reveals itself as a snake in its time.

And it'll lash out and it'll bite you. No maybes. I mean, you might get in a new relationship and be sleeping with somebody new and think that this is true love.

This man, man, he's going to really marry you this time. He's going to really do it. But years down the road, after all the lies, after all the promises, after not ever coming through with it, he never does it.

Never does it. You know, just another story, another lie. But yet it started out, oh, true love once.

Finally, I found it. Finally, I found it. But you know, the love of your soul is waiting.

The love of you has never been lost. The love of you has never been lost. But yet he calls out to you.

And then so often we don't even hear and we don't want to hear because he calls us to change. And you know, change is scary. Seriously scary.

I'll tell you what God is calling some of you to radical change. He's calling you to break off some relationships that you're in that you shouldn't be in. He's calling you to change.

Stop doing some things that you've been doing. You got to, you take the television, you throw it in the trash. You know what I'm saying? Radical, whatever it is.

And change is scary because you go and say, what do I do? What now is going to take this place? And I'm going to be serious about this. Either you fill it with something that is good or you're going to fill it with something that's evil. You might go and throw out the television but then you're going to want to fill that time with something else.

You're going to fill it with God or you're going to fill it with some other worldly thing that'll just be a greater snare. You're going to fill it with something because we have needs and those needs will either be met correctly in relationship with God or the devil will make sure that he brings across something that doesn't meet our needs but brings us into bondage. And the devil doesn't meet our needs.

Things in this world does not. I mean, tell me a millionaire who's satisfied with a million. I mean, he's not.

I mean, it just never ends. These passions and lusts of the flesh never end. You're always hearing people say, if I had a million, I'd be happy.

If I had this, I'd be happy. If I had that, I'd be happy. And they get it and it never satisfies because it's as this fire that's always being burnt and you throw more to it and it's still being burnt.

It never says enough. Just like the grave, you will never fill the grave until Jesus brings an end to it. The grave is always hungry.

I always take another one. Never heard yet the grave says enough. No people have died.

Hell is always hungry. It'll take another soul and another soul and another soul. Never says enough soul.

Let the rest go to heaven. It wants to just grab out and say, I'll take another one and I want another one. And you know what's strange is the devil just doesn't want to take you to hell.

He wants to mutilate you. One of C.S. Lewis's books in the space trilogy, he has a book called Paralandra. Paralandra, it's a science fiction about paradise being on Mars.

And this man ends up traveling there and the Adam and Eve story is taken all over again and he watches it before his eyes. And here's this one who plays the devil. And as he walks along in this paradise, everything he touches, he just whips and shreds and just destroys and just kills any animal he can because it's just not that he wants to take people to hell.

He wants to mutilate anything of God's creation. He just doesn't want you in hell. He wants you miserable.

He wants to hurt you. He wants to take everything from you. If he can rape you and leave you for dead, he will.

Because that's all he's out for. And so he'll do it with a smile. He'll do it with promises.

He'll do it with all kinds of things, as long as in the end, he strips you naked and he leaves you dead. That's it. He doesn't have your best in mind.

Turn to Psalm 63. I want to look at this from the standpoint of the righteous now. While you're turning there, I want to say something, not just because it's Father's Day, but because it's something I feel is important to men.

As we know, because you're male and they're able to produce a baby, it doesn't make you a man. I don't care if you're 50 years old or 16, it doesn't make you a man. And there's a mentality all across this country, in all races, in all groups, that's what a man is.

How many marks he can put on his belt. I grew up with it as a kid in the schools I went to. That's all it was, man.

You just wanted to know who you could lay. You just wanted another notch in your belt. Hasn't changed.

Same old thing. It's worse today just because we got so much media that is just making this as the lifestyle, the lifestyle, the lifestyle. Pastor and I were talking to somebody else last night about the aspect of a homosexual that got into his church and was leading the choir and caused some serious problems.

And the sexual crimes are getting worse day by day. The church has to confront it. Has to confront it.

Because what's sin is sin and the church has to make a call to holiness of absolute. I'm not talking about legalism. I'm not talking about making a list of do's and don'ts because I can make a list of do's and don'ts and tell you to follow them and you can still be just as wicked because wickedness is rooted in the heart.

God gets a hold of your heart and holiness will become what naturally begins to flow from you. And when you find yourself not holy, you will weep before God saying, God, I don't want nothing to separate me from your beauty, from your holiness, because you are so good. God, forgive me for this thing that has caused division because he becomes so sweet and so good to us.

In Psalm 63, it says, you are my God, earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you and my body longs for you in a dry and weary land. Where there is no water and I've seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory because your love is better than life.

My lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live and in your name, I will lift up my hands. So my soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods with singing lips.

My mouth will praise you. On my bed, I remember you. I think of you through the watches of the night because you are my hope.

I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you. Your right hand upholds me.

I want to go back before I forget to a point I wanted to make when I was speaking to men. I related in the very beginning of this message that I believe the church is the fault of the barrenness in our country. But I want to put a further fault on men because I don't believe men are being men.

The family's decayed and it's falling apart and it's men's fault because they don't have enough guts and enough courage to be a man to take care of their children, take care of their home, to stay married, to do it

right. They want to play the world and try and have a home. It doesn't work.

I mean, they want to go out there and play the field and just be a man. You know, this is just the way I am. I got to do my own thing.

Just a joke, man. Just a joke. And so they bring death to this area.

They pass it on to their children. I mean, this is sad, sad. They pass it on to their children.

Men teach their children how to do it. And so the boy watches dad that's never home and out sleeping around and doing this thing. And boy watches his father.

And he says, that's the way you treat women. And so he treats women just like that. And so the death just passes from one generation to another generation to another generation.

And it's sad. I'll tell you what, women, what you got to do is say enough's enough. I'm not going to tolerate it.

I'm not going to let a man that's not a man in my house. And I'm not going to let a man in my house unless he's my husband. I mean, I'll tell you, God's calling you if you're in sexual sin.

Here's something scary. You have to choose between that and heaven. Between that and heaven.

Because the Bible is plain and simple. It says no fornicator will enter the kingdom of heaven. That's serious stuff.

So don't go and say, I don't know where to go. There's always a place to go. There's always a place to go.

I guarantee you talk to pastor. He'll find something. It might be difficult.

You might have some hard times trying to get on your feet and taking your kids into the right place. But get out of it. Get out of it.

Don't play games. Don't say one day down the road. If the man's lying to you and just giving you all these fake promises in the future, understand what they are.

Because the next guy will say the same thing and the next guy until eventually you get so sick of it and you say, I'm tired of being abused. I'm tired of being rejected. I'm tired of men that are just wimps and don't have enough guts to be men.

I want to see men that can be courageous and stand up and be a father and be a husband and be a priest in the home. Lead the home in righteousness. Because I'll tell you what, it's going to begin with the church.

It's going to begin with men that God starts changing the desert and becoming a fertile ground. But until that time, until that time, the church has a real battle on its hands because it's fighting the desert and it's dealing with it only with drizzles, only with sprinklings rather than with downpourings. I'll tell you what, God wants to pour it out.

He wants to pour it out. Are we going to be vessels that are willing to and able to receive it? In Psalm 63 here, David refers to an attitude of the heart. And as you look through it time and time again, he refers to a heart of rejoicing.

So important. A verse that we end up using for our ministry, which is in Psalm 16 and also in Acts 2, it says, In his presence is fullness of joy. All you need is in his presence.

And now that can be sound very Christian cliché-ish, but the problem is the majority of church doesn't know that. They can say, Oh, yes, yes. But yet they're filling their lives with other things because they have not come to the point to be in his presence, to live in his presence and to know the beauty of that, how precious it is to know of a God who loves them and manifest that love that is not just hearsay, not just in words, but an action of God who loves them and loves upon them and that they can love back an interaction between man and God, between woman and God.

And so here he refers to the joy that comes through this situation. He says, I live in a desert, but yet I am well fed because I am in relationship with my God and I am in healthy relationship. His presence is in me and I am in him and I am in joy.

Though the world is decaying on me, I am in joy and he makes me to be different from the world. There's only one thing that separates you from Jehovah's Witnesses or one thing that separates you from Mormons or separates you from the dead church down the road and that's to be the presence of God. It's what Moses said.

Moses cried out when he was talking with God, and God's sending him out there. He says, if you don't go with us, we'll just be like the rest of the nations and the rest of their gods. Nobody will know the difference.

This will just be another God. He says, you have to go with us and God says, I'll go. He's the one who makes the difference in the life that you walk in and what you say becomes truth.

I mean, you hear of times where God's outpouring becomes so great. There was a situation over in Europe some years ago where a teacher was in school and all of a sudden, these kids started just weeping and crying. And next thing you know, these kids run out of the classroom and they go out into the playground and they're starting to cry and the teacher goes out there and tries to find out what's going on.

And next thing you know, it starts breaking out in the classroom. And she goes back in the classroom and the whole classroom's in hysteria as weeping and crying. I started sweeping through that whole school and it became so powerful, they canceled all the classes.

And then what ended up happening is as people would walk into the school, the presence of God would fall on them that they would fall in the entrance because God would so visit his people. Do we understand the greatness of what it is of God wanting to visit his people? I mean, he wants to visit his people, but he says, I will come to those who are hungry and thirst for me. I will come to those who are desperate for me.

And we're not desperate as long as we're in love with the things of the world, as long as we're thinking and setting our eyes on different things. We're not desperate for him. We're desperate when we get sick and tired of it all.

We become desperate when there is no water anywhere to be found and I'm in this desert. I'm dying of thirst. My canteen's empty.

I've dug a hole. There's nothing there. And then all of a sudden, I start getting desperate and I cry out to God.

But as long as I feel there's self-sufficiency in me that I can do it on my own, I'll keep doing it on my own because we're stubborn, stubborn, proud people. God wants to stir us so that he might satisfy us, so that he might meet our need. Because when we come to the desert and we say, God, I'm thirsty and there's a multitude around me that they're dying of thirst and I don't have nothing to give myself, much less give them.

God, unless you break into my world and change me, how am I going to change my children? How am I going to change my grandchildren? How am I going to change the kids down the street? Because I don't have nothing. I'm bone dry, bone dry. We find with the thirst and desire that David speaks.

He says, I will seek you earnestly with desire, with passion. He says, my soul thirsts for you, not for the things of this world, but for God himself. He says, my soul is satisfied in you.

And here comes the thing is he was satisfied fully in God, not in the things of the world. It didn't matter. Paul says, I count everything as done.

You might get the surpassing greatness of knowing God, not knowing about God. So many church people know about God, but they don't know God. And it's not what you've done in the past.

I don't care what you've done in the past. I don't care how many times you've been to an altar. It doesn't matter.

It's what you know now and where you are now. He says, I am filled with joy. And then he says, my soul clings to you.

And the reason he brings out, he says, I beheld you in the sanctuary. I beheld you in the sanctuary. You know, you're not going to behold Jesus in the bar.

You're not going to behold him in the arguments in the hall, in the violence in the hall. You're not going to behold him in the beauty of his holiness when you're blowing away on drugs. It's not going to happen.

It's not going to happen. He changed because of one thing, not because he went to another therapy group, but because he saw God. We don't make him as scary as what he really is.

C.S. Lewis in another one of his books in the Chronicles of Narnia, these kids are looking, and it's a story and it relates to Christianity. These children are looking for Aslan, the lion, and the lion is representative of Jesus Christ. And the children ask their guide says, is he safe? And the guide says, no, he is not safe, but he's good.

God's not safe. The one who with a word created heaven, earth, he's not a safe God. I mean, he's not a God you want to confront in your sin.

He's a scary God. The thing is, we've made him such mush, made him so weak that we don't tremble before him, that we can go out and we can do wrong and figure we can just make everything right with a little prayer and go out and do it again. And we don't understand that God's silence and Psalms bring this out in Psalms 50.

He says that God's silence is actually his anger being stored up against us. We figure because he doesn't just lash out at us because we do something wrong that he doesn't care what it says that he is going to array them against us until the day that we are confronted with this army of our sins. And what then shall

we do? What then shall we do when we have continued to rebel against him and not submitted to him? And most of all, is why should you submit to him? Out of fear of hell? No, because he's good.

Now, if I can scare you out of hell into heaven, I will. And when you read the accounts of the revival of the first great awakening and Jonathan Edwards, he was a mundane preacher. He was nearsighted.

So he held the paper of the sermon that he wrote up to his face like this and just read it. But yet it related to the situation that people would grab hold of their pews and others would grab hold of pillars because they were afraid of being cast into hell because they did. They came to a point to begin to grasp the severity of sin, the great wickedness of it.

And they feared for their own souls. But for so long, sin is not that bad. It's not that wicked.

What I'm doing is not that wrong. I want to make, redefine something this morning because America and American Christianity has watered down the gospel more and more and more. We like this term rededicate.

I don't like that term rededicate because America rededicates itself and rededicates itself and rededicates itself, rededicates itself. I want to use a biblical term. That's lit.

But that's in our face. That's a difficult one for us to deal with because it's right before us. It says I am separated from my God because I am persistent in sin.

That's hard to deal with. We don't like that. So to make it a little more palatable, we make it a little easier.

We say, well, you just need to be rededicated. But God puts it point blank. He says, you have turned from your first love.

He tells the church that Ephesus is you turn from your first love, repent or I will take away your candlestick. I will take away your salvation. And this is hard.

But I say this because it's true. And I say this because this is a message America needs to hear so that we come to right standing with our maker. So we don't go and degrade him just thinking that he will just not look badly upon our sin.

He knows. Well, this is just me. God does know.

And that's what terrifies us. He knows that we're able to be more than conquerors. He knows that.

He knows also that you don't overcome because you don't choose to. And that's the situation. You remain in your relationship because you choose to.

You remain doing the things in your life you do because you choose to. I remember with my church in Detroit, I had this young man couldn't keep his pants zipped up. And so I talked to him and I said, I said, what's wrong? He said, man, I just can't do it.

He said, I can't do it. I said, it's not that you can't. You don't want to.

OK, it's nitty gritty. What it is, we got to be confronted. We got to face the reality of it.

It's not that we can't. It's that we don't want to. And if we say we don't want to, that scares us to pieces because then it makes the judgment of God just against us because it manifests our true motives.

As long as we say, well, I can't. This is, you know, it's an addiction. It's a problem I have.

So you don't want to. There's always a way. God promised it.

He always will make a way of escape. But we have to have the courage to accept it. And we have to be willing to be confronted with it and say, yes, Lord, I will follow.

I will follow. This comes out of Exodus 17, the sixth verse. It says, behold, I will stand before you there on the rock of Horeb and you shall strike the rock and water will come out of it that the people may drink.

And Paul ends up speaking of this in relation to Christ. Christ was that rock who was smitten, hung on a cross so that we might be able to drink because we're in a desert. But the ability to be satisfied only came through that rock.

There was no other water in the land. It came from no other place. It came out of that rock to satisfy the people.

There is nothing else. There is no other place. So I want to go back a little bit to the idea of being backslid.

You're backslid. And I want to define this a little bit. You're backslid if you've lost your first law.

You're backslid if you can watch things on television or go to the movies that are R and X rated PG-13, things where people are stripping and having sex and just speaking off and doing all kinds of violence. Now that's difficult. But how can you sit in front of something that Christ would have no part of? The next time you go to watch something, say, Jesus, come here, sit next to me.

What do you think of this movie? What do you think of this sitcom? What do you think of this show? What do you think of the CD I'm listening to? Would you sit here and listen to me for a while, Jesus? And then give me your critique of it. I know you don't have to go to such extremes because you know. You know you're backslid.

Now you might try and say, well, I just like the beat. I just like the music. I just like this.

You're backslid. Because you have put your heart in something else. You have compromised your lifestyle to become more worldly and to say, I'm just growing.

You're not growing. You're backslid. You've lost your first love.

You're backslid if you walk with them and you're in a sexual union that you should not be in. You're backslid. You're backslid.

There's no other way of looking at it. Now you disagree with me. I'll show you scripture after scripture after scripture after scripture that says I'm right.

Are you going to receive it? Are you going to receive it? God's calling you to holiness. It's not the aspect of giving up. It's the aspect of what you get.

Because what I end up getting when I sell off and I go buy that field that has a treasure in it, I get that treasure. And that treasure is Jesus Christ. He's the one I get.

He ends up having a way of giving back to me everything that the devil took and he gives it back right. Some of you have had relationships and they've been bad relationships. They've been hurtful relationships.

You're sick of it. You're sick of the problems and all the stuff that goes through. You change and you let God get a hold of your life and you really change.

I'll tell you what, you won't pick the same type of man or you won't pick the same type of woman. Because all of a sudden you start looking at godly. And God will give you something like you never had before.

You could never dream of because you would allow him to change your life. What you give up is nothing compared to what you give back. It's like Moses, when Moses had the staff in his hand and God told Moses, says, throw down the staff.

What did the staff do? What did it become? A serpent. And what did God tell Moses to do then? He said, go pick it up by the tail. Dumb thing, because that serpent's going to turn around and bite him and kill him.

But yet when he threw that down, when he threw that rod down, gave it up, and God says, you go pick that up now. What did he do? He took the bite out of that serpent. And now that rod became a means of miracles.

So that's the whole thing, is when you give up, it's not like you're giving up. It's that God takes from you that which will destroy you and gives you something so much better. He gives you something so much better.

You hold on to the vomit and the garbage of this world instead of the beauty of who Christ is. To know him and his loveliness. You hold on to the hurts and the pains, the struggles in your life instead of coming to the healer, the one who wants to touch you.

Why should you continue hurting? Why should you continue in pain when he calls you and he wants to do so much? So in a minute, I'm going to open this altar up. I'm going to call you that need to repent, to come forward. I'm going to call the backsliders up.

I'm going to call you that are in sin and you know that you have a sin in your life and need to take care of. And if you're here and you've never given your heart to Christ, I don't care how old you are or how young you are, if you've never given your heart to Christ, I'm going to ask you to come forward as well because God wants to rescue you from your sin, rescue you from your pain, rescue you from the damage you do to yourself.

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