

Recognizing God's Visitation

by Ian Robson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the things that make for peace, both with God and with others. It highlights the need to be reconciled to God and to one another, focusing on the significance of the cross and the blood of Jesus in bringing about peace. The speaker urges listeners to value the blood of Christ, be diligent in holy conduct, and seek reconciliation in order to be found in peace when facing the day of the Lord.

Scripture: Luke 19:41, Psalm 139:23, John 14:27, Ephesians 2:13, 2 Corinthians 5:18, Hebrews 10:19, 2 Peter 3:10

Topics: "Reconciliation", "The Blood of Christ"

Description

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Transcript

The word on my heart this morning is from Luke chapter 19, verse 41 to 44, and these are the words of Jesus that He spoke before He went to the cross, and it says there, when He approached Jerusalem, Luke 19, verse 41, when He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. The two phrases here I want that we think about this morning and let God speak to us in verse 42.

It says, If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace. There are things which make for peace that God reveals to us and God sought to reveal to His people when Jesus was on the earth, but they rejected those things and He says, they have been hidden from your eyes. And that's a sad thing, when the things that make for peace get hidden from our eyes.

And the second phrase there, it says, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. In the Message Bible it says, when the city came into view, He wept over it. If you had only recognized this day and everything that was good for you, but now it's too late.

All this because you didn't recognize and welcome God's personal visit. It's not a general visit, it's a personal visit that God makes to each one of us and we can see where that begins. And it's a great grief to God when we don't welcome and recognize God's personal visit.

If you look through the scriptures, there were times that God manifested Himself and visited. You think of Abraham, when God wanted to reveal His purpose to him. You think of Jacob.

You think of many ones like that under the Old Covenant. And in the New Covenant, we think of Zacharias, God visited him, and Elizabeth, his wife, and Mary, and Joseph, and Paul, right through. Towards the end, we see God visited the leader and the church in Laodicea.

They didn't recognize Him. They didn't recognize Him. He was standing outside the door and He says, still, He said, behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any man, any woman hear my voice and open the door, I will come in.

It's not speaking to unbelievers there. Many people use that, you know, to speak to unbelievers. That is not the gospel.

That's a word that Jesus spoke to the church. A personal visit He made to that church, but they didn't recognize Him. They had become rich.

The leader said, I need of nothing. Don't even need anyone now anymore. Jesus said, you don't know your condition.

You don't know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Sad thing, my brothers and sisters, it's a tragedy when we don't recognize God's personal visit. And I'm not just talking about the time when we repented of our sins and came to Christ.

That's where it begins. There are many times that God makes a personal visit or seeks to make a personal visit in our lives as we seek to follow Him. I know that He's done that in my life, and this word that we just read was when God made a personal visit to us, when we were in a denomination, and to the church there.

And we saw the things that make for peace. The whole church didn't see it. Maybe some did.

We recognized the day of God's visitation. God had already spoken through servants He brought across our path when we were in that church, but they didn't recognize the things that make for peace. They didn't recognize the day of visitation.

Could have been a different story today. And that church is in a mess, a real mess. It's got from bad to worse and worse and worse.

That can happen to us, my brothers and sisters. Let's not think that we are exempted because we have had Brother Zach with us, we have had the messages of the New Covenant. That can happen to us, even all that we have heard here through the years.

In those times, when God seeks to draw near to us and show us things in our own lives, in our homes, our families, our marriage relationship, the things that make for peace. And if we don't receive them, they get hidden from our eyes. That's what happened to God's people.

At one time, God said, My house, He called it My house shall be called a house of prayer. Another time, we read that in Luke 13, He says, How often I wanted to gather you together as a hen gathers her chicks. Have you seen that? You know, we grew up, we had poultry.

My dad loved poultry and we had a big backyard. And we would see this hen with her chickens. They would be going and feeding here, feeding there.

But suddenly the mother would give a call. You know, there's a vulture, an eagle that comes over. The mother sees the shadow.

She gives a call and it's such a lovely sight to see. I don't know if you've seen it. All those chickens running.

And she lifts her wings. And they come under her wings and you don't see one chick. Beautiful picture.

That's what Jesus said. How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chickens, but you would not let me. Caiaphas prophesied that one man should die for the nation, not for the nation only.

You read that in John chapter 12, I think. But to gather together the children who are scattered abroad in all the world. Not just that he should die for the nation and die for the sins of the world, but to gather together.

That's what God is doing in these days. I hope you see it. God is gathering together the children of God scattered abroad, bringing them together into the body of Christ.

I pray that we would really seek to recognize God's personal visit, my brothers and sisters. Through the years, it was not just 44 years ago, through the years, I had many times when God has personally visited me. I don't see him, and I know you feel, not only feel his presence, but there's something specific that God has to say that lifts us higher or leads us in a direction that he wants us to go.

I saw that many times, even through discipline. When God had to discipline me through sickness, that was the time he drew near to me. It says that in James chapter 4 verse 8, James 4 verse 8, it says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. When we draw near to God, we, like Isaiah, he saw his glory and he was convicted.

I said, oh Lord, I'm a man of unclean lips. Paul, in Romans chapter 7, when he saw that he did not keep the 10th commandment, he said, I found in me coveting of every kind. What shall I do? I want to do good, I want to do God's will, but there is this within me that wants to follow after my flesh and do my own will.

Oh, wretched man that I am. That will always be. When we draw near to God, that will always be.

Then I know that I'm drawing near to God and God is drawing near to me. I'll be conscious not of somebody else's sin and failure, not of my wife's sin and failure, if there are sins and failures. That is her business.

Not your husband's sin and failure. That's his business. For your children, if they have grown up.

And we get so occupied with the sins of others that we don't recognize God's visitation. We don't draw near to God. If I draw near to God, I'll be conscious of my own sin.

I know that many, many times. And how it may, maybe in a trial, maybe in a difficulty, maybe things that I face in the home, maybe things that I face in the job, and God draws near to me and He shows me. He shows me what He wants to do in my life.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

That's what the Holy Spirit says. And in Isaiah chapter 55, Isaiah 55, turn to it in verses 6 and 7, it says, Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near.

There are times when God draws near to us, and we know it. If we are walking with the Lord, if we really have had a personal encounter with God through Jesus and repented of our sins and we are walking with Him and seeking to follow Him, we will sense times when He is near. Call upon Him, it says, while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake His way. See, that's what happens when I call upon God when He is near. We see it again.

Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Isaiah was convicted of the words that he spoke. Oh, I am a man of unclean lips.

I dwell among a people of unclean lips. It will always be like that. We will not be occupied with somebody else's sin and somebody else's failure.

I will not be looking around in the church and trying to find fault. I will be seeing my own sin and failure and I judge myself. It says, Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord and He will have compassion on him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. I like that. God abundantly pardons.

He is not stingy in His pardon, in His forgiveness. Abundantly He forgives and pardons us. And what blinds your eyes and my eyes, my brothers and sisters, is unbelief.

I don't believe. I don't believe that it can be different in my life. Indifference.

I can you know get comfortable and I get lulled into a comfort that I don't hear God. I don't sense when He is near. Or like those two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

They didn't recognize when Jesus came and joined them. They were so occupied with the things that have happened. And Jesus said, What things? What is this you are talking about? And we can be so occupied with the things that happen, that go wrong in the home, maybe in some family situation, maybe in the office, or maybe something that we are facing personally.

We get so occupied with it that we don't see Jesus. They didn't see Him. And He came alongside them.

And then He began to speak to them. But He said to them, Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written. That's the problem today with God's people.

Fools and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have written. Then He began to speak open the scriptures to them concerning Himself. Must have been a one hour Bible study as they walked together.

And they afterwards testified that their hearts burned with Him while He explained the scriptures to them. Then their eyes were opened when He broke bread. And they saw Him and He disappeared.

So I want to really help us to take it seriously to stop getting occupied with all the things that happen around us. Stop getting occupied with the problems that you may have with your children. Stop getting occupied with your wife's failure, with your husband's failure, with your children's problems.

Get occupied with yourself. Then God can draw near to us. In John chapter 12 verse 31 to 33, the word that we can always think about is Jesus said, Now judgment is upon the world.

Now the rule of this world will be cast out. And if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.

And I pray this morning that we will see Jesus lifted up in our midst. And we will be drawn to Him. And stop getting occupied with all the things that have distracted us and kept us from recognizing the times when He wanted to have a personal visit.

But our eyes were blinded because of unbelief, because of indifference, or because we are slow of heart to believe all that God has written. And we don't think it can be different. God has wonderful plans, my brothers and sisters.

If you're part of the family of God, if you're here this morning and you have come in through the door, you have come in through repentance and faith and surrendered your life to Christ, and you have the assurance that your sins have been forgiven, God has wonderful plans for you. But there are times that we have to recognize when God draws near to us, He wants to reveal Himself to us, and He wants to do things in our lives. The things that make for peace.

That's what Jesus said. If you, in this day, today, will recognize the things that make for peace. And I pray that these things, four important things, will not be hidden from our eyes.

I don't care about days and dates, what your experience is and what God has brought to you. I don't glory in that anymore. I want to see today the things that make for peace.

And it begins, like I said earlier, at the cross. Peace was first made at the cross. This is the place where we first find peace.

And I'm not talking about a day and a date, whether you remember it or not. I can remember it. But there are many times I've come back to that cross, where I first made peace.

I hope it's like that for you, that you have come back to that cross many times. Don't be satisfied that you are born again, you are baptized in water, even baptized in the Holy Spirit. I want to ask you, my dear brother and sister, have you come back to that cross where you first made peace? Because it's from there that we can have a personal visit.

That's there when God can visit us. That we have a personal encounter, not just one time. I hope all of us here have had that personal encounter.

You have not just believed the truth. You have not just read Good Foundation. You have not just prayed a prayer, the sinner's prayer.

I hope and pray that every one of us sitting here and hearing this this morning have had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. You have not got it second hand. It's not been handed down from CFC.

It's not been handed down from your parents if they have been born again and they have been following the Lord. But you received it first hand. That is what Paul said.

I received it first hand. I want to say to every one of you in Jesus name, have you received it first hand? Or is it still second hand? I want to invite you this morning to come to that place where it can become first hand, and that's at the cross. You see Romans chapter five.

This is where it begins. We are justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to read that to you from the Living Bible, Romans five verses one and two. So now, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in his promises, we can have real peace with him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. But because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, the grace in which we stand.

And we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has in mind for us to be. And it goes on to say, you know, that hope does not disappoint us because the love of God is being poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. That is where it begins, my brothers and sisters.

I hope and pray that every one of you who have confessed and professed faith in Jesus have come to this place. This is where, these are the things that make for peace. It begins at the cross and it doesn't end there.

All through my life till Jesus returns, it must always be at the cross. It is there that God made peace with us. It's there that we made peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ because of what he did for this.

Peace with God and peace with man. I want you to see that. We have heard that very clearly here, not far back when Brother Zach was saying about the cross.

The cross has two arms, one vertical and one horizontal. That's the cross. Not a symbol that we put outside the church, not something that we bear on our neck.

The cross which determines my relationship with God, that I made peace with him and I made peace with man. That's the cross I'm speaking about this morning. That's the cross the Bible speaks about.

Peace with man. Are you at peace with every human being? More so with your brothers and sisters. Are you at peace with your husband? Are you at peace with your wife? Do you have peace with your children? I want to say, if you don't have peace, something's happened.

You have not recognized the things that make for peace. Wake up before it's too late, like Jesus said, before they are hidden from your eyes. Ephesians chapter 2, I'd like you to turn to that.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 13 and 18. Not only we have a vertical relationship with God, we made peace with him because of what Jesus did for us, but we also have peace with man. It says now, Ephesians 2 verse 13 to 18, but now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the

blood of Christ for he himself is our peace.

Listen to this carefully. He himself is our peace who made both groups. Now it's not talking about this vertical, it's talking about this horizontal relationship.

He himself is our peace who made both groups into one, broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in himself he might make, listen to it again, make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace. And might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who are far away and peace to those who are near.

For through him we both have our access in one spirit to the father. That happened at the cross. That's where it begins, not just this relationship, but this relationship, my brothers and sisters.

And I hope and pray that we have experienced that God can make two into one new man, thus establishing peace. He's broken down the barriers, broken down the walls, whatever community between Jew and Gentile, they just hated each other. God broke that barrier down.

Jesus broke it down at the cross where Jew and Gentile can become one. And that's what God has done for us. Whatever community we may be from, those barriers, those walls have been broken down.

Is there some community you don't like? You don't hate, but I don't like them. Is that true for any one of us? Is some people of a particular language or culture? No, no, you don't say it out because you want to keep your reputation. My dear brothers and sisters, those walls, those barriers have been broken down at the cross.

In Christ, there is no community. There are no Tamilians and Connecticuters and Anglo-Indians and Malayalees and whatever else you have. It was all broken down at the cross.

We are made into one new man and we are reconciled in one body. There are no two bodies to God through the cross by having put to death the enmity. And whatever it is that separated us before has been broken down and God has brought us together.

If you look at 2 Corinthians in chapter 5, 2 Corinthians in chapter 5, it says we are ambassadors for Christ. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 in verse 18, it says now all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Before that, verse 17, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.

He is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, new things have come.

All these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. You want a ministry? My brothers and sisters, everybody now is owning a ministry. They want a ministry.

They want a ministry in the church. Here is a beautiful ministry. I thank God for it.

I love this ministry. Gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. Here is a ministry.

God doesn't count our trespasses against us. And he has committed to us, you and me, the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ.

Are you an ambassador for Christ, my brothers and sisters? That's what we are called to be. We are ambassadors for Christ. Though God were making an appeal to us, we beg you.

This is what the Holy Spirit says. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. And if you're not reconciled to your brother or sister, to your husband or wife or your children, you're not reconciled to God.

Very clear. You cannot have just one arm. It has to have the cross.

It's two arms, vertical, horizontal. If you're not reconciled to anyone sitting here or anybody in your office or your family, your relatives, I want to say to you in Jesus name, you are not reconciled to God. And I plead with you like the Holy Spirit.

We beg you on behalf of Christ, get reconciled to God first. It says he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him and working together with him. We work together with him, urging you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

I'm afraid that many of us sitting here have received the grace of God in vain. You have not recognized the personal visit that God has made to you. When you got into problems, whether it's a relative, whether it's a brother or sister, whether it's somebody in the church, in your family, you've not recognized the time and God has drawn near to you.

I know that happened to me many years ago. Many years ago when God told me you're so occupied with a problem that you're having with somebody and you've not heard me. And I repented and wept before God and then that many times.

That is our problem, my brothers and sisters. We don't, that's why the things of peace are hidden from our eyes. It is peace with God and peace with man.

And the Holy Spirit says, I beg you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. And I beg you, whoever it is, if you're there listening on the livestream, I beg you, be reconciled to God. On behalf of Christ, I beg you.

I know there are people who can break bread and not be talking to each other. There are people who don't like one another, come here to break bread. That's the condition, that's the level we have dropped to.

Husband and wives fight and you may have your spats, but I hope that we can make peace. I'm sorry, please forgive me. It's my fault.

I take the blame once peace is restored. Why is it our homes are not what it should be? We do not recognize the things that make for peace. Be reconciled to God, my brothers and sisters, and you'll be reconciled to your brothers and sisters.

Jesus weeps. I want to say to you this morning, he still weeps over his people. Does he weep over your life, my life? Because we don't recognize the things that make for peace.

We don't know the things which make for peace. Reconciliation. God has committed to you and me the word of reconciliation.

God has given you and me a ministry. Leave the correction and discipline for those who have that grace. Our ministry and our work is to get people reconciled to God, reconciled to Jesus.

The second thing I want you to see that makes for peace is the blood. The cross, immediately on that cross is the blood. Peace through the blood of the cross.

Thank God for the blood. There's power in the blood. The blood that cleanses you and me from all sin, blotted out our past.

Not only blotted out our past, but even after coming to Christ and we fail and fall, we confess our sin is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, cleanse us from all unrighteousness. All the sins, unconscious sins that we commit, the blood of Jesus cleanses us. Colossians chapter 1, verse 20.

It says, through him we are cleansed through Jesus. God has reconciled all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross. Through him I say whether things on earth or things in heaven.

In Ephesians chapter 2, verse 13. Ephesians 2, verse 13. Now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Do you know, all of us sitting here at once were far off. Think back. But we have been brought near not because of CFC, not because of the messages we hear.

We thank God for that. We have been brought near because of the blood of Christ. And if we are joined together as a church as one body, it's because of the blood of Christ.

Because God has made peace through the blood of his cross. Jesus has made peace through the blood of his cross. Hebrews chapter 10, verses 19 and 20.

It says, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil that is his flesh. The blood of Jesus.

We have confidence to enter the holy place. Not because I know the doctrine, I know the truth, I can explain it to others, but it's because of the blood of Jesus I have confidence and boldness to enter into God's presence. Thank God for the blood.

This is the thing that makes for peace. Not once and for all that I came to Jesus, but constantly, continually, I see the power of Jesus' blood and what he can do in my life and what he can do in others. God said to his people, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

When I see the blood, I will pass over you. When God gave commandments to put the blood on their door posts and their lintels. They did not come under God's judgment and anger.

So God passes over the sins, even the sins we commit in ignorance. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness. When we think of that, why don't, listen carefully, why don't you and I pass over the sins of those who sin against us? If God says when I see the blood, I will pass over the sins committed in ignorance, why don't I pass over the sins of those who sin against us? Why is it I have my hand on somebody's throat? God made peace through the blood of Jesus' cross.

Why don't we make peace in the same way, the same blood, where God made peace with me? Why don't I, the same blood, under the same blood, make peace with my brother and sister, whoever it may be, your

husband or your wife who sinned against you? He weeps, my brothers and sisters. He weeps because we are so selfish we want the blood only for ourselves. I don't see the blood that God has forgiven my brother's sins, my sister's sins, my wife's sin, my husband's sin.

I don't see the blood. Jesus weeps today over his people. I am not talking about people in the world.

I feel I should stop there. There are two more things, but I feel that that's where God will have us think. There are two things that make for peace.

The cross where Jesus died, where I first made peace with him and he made peace with me, and where I seek to be at peace with all men. We heard in the memory verse of last week, just turn there for a moment and I'll stop with that, 2 Peter. I hope we keep this in our hearts.

2 Peter in chapter 3, it says there, begins with the day of the Lord, verse 10, will come like a thief. It's written 2,000 years ago. The day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Listen to this, what the Holy Spirit says. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat. But according to his promise, we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

And this was our memory verse. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, in peace, spotless and blameless. If we were to move into God's presence today, would we be in peace? Not only peace with God, but peace with our brothers and sisters and peace with one another, whoever it may be.

He says, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. Let us take heed and come back where we began, to the cross. Value the blood that was shed for me and for my brothers and sisters.

Be reconciled to God, be reconciled to one another. May God speak to us that we would know these things that make for peace and recognize the day of God's personal visit. And I believe that God is visiting some of us today.

I hope you do what the Holy Spirit tells you, draw near to God, he will draw near to you. May God bring a spirit of repentance. May we hear the Spirit's voice that says, I beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God and be reconciled to one another.

Amen.

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