

Opening the Word of God

by John Follette

John Follette's sermon explores the dynamic and progressive nature of understanding the Word of God and the necessity of spiritual conditioning for deeper experiences with Him.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Matthew 11:28, John 14:6, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Gods Truth"

Description

John Follette emphasizes the progressive nature of understanding the Word of God, highlighting the importance of continually being conditioned in heart and spirit to receive truth. He stresses the need for a personal, ongoing experience with God rather than just acquiring doctrines, pointing out that God is to be experienced, not merely defined. Follette discusses the process of spiritual growth and the conditioning of the heart for deeper revelations, urging listeners to hunger and thirst for God's truth while being prepared for its reception.

Transcript

I shared this the other day, but I want to remind you of this truth you must remember in your Bible work. Read the Bible, study the Bible, love the Bible. But you know by and by it takes such various forms to you. How many feel, when you read the Bible today, that you aren't reading the same book you were 20 years ago. Have you ever had that experience? Well, you should. It is the same, but something has happened. . .you have changed. The word never changes, it has always been there, but you and I have changed.

Dealing with the word of God, with truth, the whole revelation of truth to you, or to me, is purely a progressive matter. It is not attained in a moment, it is not acquired in three weeks of Bible study, you don't finish it in a course. . .it is an eternal lovely beautiful thing. I have found there is no exhausting a truth when God shows it to you, there is no finishing about it. . .it is just a continual progressive unfolding. This is something that you learn, it is something that you continually discover. God isn't a

definition, God is what you experience. . . You experience God, you can't define Him. The revelation of truth is something that I have found after years, is not something we get like a doctrine. . . it is one of the most profound things I've ever touched and it is given to us in Jesus Christ.

He is the truth, not He has truth or He will talk about truth, but He is truth. Many people have sat at the feet of great scholars and profound leaders and thinkers. But not one of them could ever get up and say, "I am the truth." Every one of them has had to say, "I have some truth." Christ is the truth.

This whole idea of God, of truth, of spiritual reality. . . I call it the realm of spiritual reality in which God has brought us. . . that is purely progressive. Every heart has to continually be conditioned for its reception. Don't just park on the fact that it is wonderful and inexhaustible and that you are hungry for it. God says, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst for they shall be filled." Some want to be filled right now. God can't. Why? You are not yet conditioned for the thing that you are anticipating. You have to be conditioned continually in heart and spirit for the reception of that which you now hope for and long for. It is the conditioning process which is so disturbing.

The desire is so sweet, to have that urge of the spirit stirring in you for more of God. How many know the thrill of it, how delightful it is? Sometimes that's all we have to live by, that earnest urge and desire, when all our emotional life is silent and God has been able to deal with it so we don't trouble with it.

When that's all done and gone, still that urge can carry. But listen to me. . . even that urge cannot find its fullness nor its satisfaction until the heart is continually conditioned for its reception and then, you can have it. You can pray and cry and fast, etc. and you can't get it. That is earning it and you can't buy it. It is so subtle, so strange, its a mystery. But He says, "If you will let me, I can come into you and into your heart and life, possessing you and if you will dare to let Me have My way with you."

God says our heart must be conditioned. When the heart has come to a place of receptivity thru His conditioning you can approach that same old truth again and you will come to the presence of the same wonderful lovely Lord, but your reaction will be exactly different.

I am a realist and yet I am spiritual. And I have discovered some very profound and wonderful things in God by being simply honest with Him. He will slay us. . . certainly. He will crucify us. . . certainly. But we don't bring that out into the public and cry, "I've been crucified." He has given us a whole

basket full of masks to wear. People have often said to my, "Follette, how do you get things from God?" I tell them they wouldn't want to go through what I do, they couldn't do it.

What do I mean by conditioning? People say to me they are saved. I hope they are. They are filled with the spirit. That's fine, but that doesn't condition them. No one experience, I don't care how profound or how moving or how marvelous that experience is, the experience in itself never matures you. This process of disciplining qualifies us. You don't have to tell the people about it, it isn't their business. It is yours and the Lord's business. How many are glad He doesn't make it public business? How many have secrets with the Lord? The Lord is wonderful. Is it a mask or an un-reality for me to say that? No, I am saying the truth, but I'm not telling you all the things that happened inside before I could say that.

I can't tell you how the Lord disciplines me. You can't follow me in my discipline. I can't follow you in your discipline either. Every heart has its own discipline, every heart has its own problem, every heart has its own individual dealings with God and God with it. Now that's not public, but the results of those dealings, if they are in God, in the spirit, and you actually come through, how many know you will have a freshness. There will be something of God there, there will be a fruit, there will be bread.

Remember, truth is purely progressive in all forms. The heart is continually conditioned for its reception and we grow. And then, under the impact of that truth, we sort of receive and we go about our doings. We're normal people. . .we eat and drink and we wear clothes. That's all right. That is something which is boring for me, but it is something that we are going through while God is accomplishing this invisible spiritual miracle in the heart of a person.

How many know that, in a body, a growing child has certain symptoms every little while. He gets the mumps, then the measles and these are all a part of the growth of a child. He has all of this. Well, some people are scared because we find the body of Christ breaking out with all these funny things. It is an epidemic in the body of Christ right now. If you're not schooled in the ways of the spirit, you're apt to catch it. Do you know what healed it? Now very often with the disease in the body, how many know that if you will just be quiet, the power of the life within will push off that external thing. It will. That's why the body of Christ has to have intense vitality to resist all these strange maladies that strikes a

body. The body of Christ is sick; the body of Christ today is wounded, sick and sore. Why? Because all of these strange maladies have laid hold of it and there is seemingly so little strength, spiritual vitality and spiritual reality. Not emotional stuff, but life, life in God. . .spirit, prayer, dedication. The spirit of God will penetrate that thing and chop it off at the body. . .you don't even go near it. The power of the life of God will push it off and God will yet have a body.

God will yet have a body that He can take. It won't be all full of things either. That's why my burden is for God's children, for the body of Christ. This burden is upon me day and night. He put it upon me. I didn't ask for it, its too terrific to ask for it. But He will put it upon you, that these precious members of the body could receive light, instruction, vision, strength, the culture of the spirit to come into the things that He wants. Pushing aside all of the old patterns, say, "Lord, whatever there is left of life, for Jesus' sake, take what is left of me that seems such a wreck, but take it and make it all you possibly can for the glory of God." That's all we will have to honor Him with.

Yesterday we were dealing with this 5th chapter of Luke and we didn't get very far with it. I could spend a month right now on this 5th chapter but I am just going to point out a few little things. Remember, in the word of God there is nothing that is accidental and there is nothing that is occasional. It isn't something that occasionally happens this way or accidentally came to past that way. Everything in this word of God, every story, every conversation, every dramatic moving of a nation or a person or a group, every bit of that is a dramatic picture highly charged with most profound and wonderful spiritual reality. But it is all veiled under the surface picture, but that is the way He likes to work.

Here we have a surface picture of going fishing. The story is not just given because it makes a pleasing story. There is a tremendous truth in there that is trying to penetrate and break through all those coverings.

Many of the actresses and actors we have today are really marvelous people. They have a great message that they would like to portray. Some of those very actors will refuse to act with the stage setting so interesting and intriguing that the people become absorbed in the trappings and miss the thing that the artist is saying.

Sometimes that is the way it is in these teachings. I gave a message on the Marriage in Cana and when I got into that story the Lord made me to see very simply how it was most always presented and preached, that it was the first miracle of Jesus and all that. He showed me that they had mostly a picture frame without the picture. They have a wonderful, ornate, picture frame of the jugs of water, and Mary, etc., and they've lost the picture. Years ago the Lord showed me this and He told me to try and look past the picture frame and the story, don't be too absorbed with that. Always remember that the truth is an invisible extract bit of reality.

I was reading one time, and I had for years been absorbed in this word from the deeper spiritual sense of revelation and opening. As I was reading, I came to this passage where Jesus told what His word really was. He stood before them and He had been pouring out truths, He's been pouring out the message of God for days. He has been working miracles as a little side attraction, a show, as a symbol to explain some of it. But finally, He stood up one day and He said, "The message, the word that I give you, the message that I bring, this wonderful truth which is from God to you, is here and He held up a Scofield Bible." How many get the point or don't you? Is that what He held up? No, He didn't. He didn't even hold up a scroll and say this is My word. He said, the word, the truth, this eternal everlasting word of God, the truth, the light, this flash of reality that radiates and moves through Him to this dark world, this word is spirit and it is life. How many see two abstractions right away. I'm talking about the essence of reality. He said, the truth, this glorious revelation that's flashing through me, the truth that I've come to spread over the face of this very earth to dispel its awful darkness, this truth is spirit and it is life.

Jesus said, "In order to make this reality of spirit and life real to you, I will dramatize it. I will call upon every feature in creation, from the earth to the sky, the moon to the stars, to everything I have ever created including the devil; and I will bunch them together and present them in most peculiar fashion that through that spirit and life may vibrate and strike your heart." That spirit of God that brought forth life in the beginning is moving through those words until they begin to speak to your heart. You can read the word and be dead as dead. Why? The letter of the word is good, it is inspired, God wrote it, God breathed it into the hearts and lives of men and they wrote it; but how many know the letter is

yet the letter. He says My message is not just this letter, My message is spirit and it is life, but it will push its way through this phenomenal thing which we call the Bible which I have given, and then it will speak.

Jesus had to correct the very scribes that were reading the law. How many know how sacred they hold that word the law? They kissed it, they loved that scroll, it was so holy. . .it is a holy thing, that's the point. And one day they were reading and He comes and leans over and He said, "You search these Scriptures (they were reading the letter of the law), thinking that in them you will find the secret of life and you will not touch Me about whom those are only the writings and here is the Eternal Word." Do you get it? How He must have suffered. He was the Son of God, the all truth dwelt in Him. . .to stand among those people and have them fussing around a scroll. Its a wonder that He didn't die before they got Him to Calvary. I wonder that that sensitive, marvelous man didn't die from the fumbling of flesh; nice flesh, religious flesh, awful good flesh. . .that's enough to kill any one.

I've been around religious people and the smell of flesh was worse than cigarettes on a sinner. That's right. I wish you would feel and know the things I do. I'm a sensitized spirit and I didn't make myself that way, but I wish sometimes people could. It isn't pleasant, but its a part of His suffering to bring this body to its perfection and some day it will be released.

He says, "My word, in reality it is spirit, it is life. These two things that the old dead world has no consciousness of, I have come to bring you." He told them that He had come to give them life, but in order that they may discern it, He says, I will compile this strange and wonderful word and He has breathed it, God breathed this word out, man didn't write it. God breathed it out and He caused them to write all these lovely things.

Paul said that all these things are recorded here in the word as admonition for us. Why? He has recorded all these things because there isn't a thing in that word but what it has spiritual significance. Paul said this has all been recorded, preserved, and written to us for our admonition, to instruct us, to teach us, to liberate us and to set us free.

So, when I read the Bible, I don't read it as I would a book. Why? Because I know this is the medium, ordained of God and breathed of God, through which spirit and life is going to vibrate and move. Get

it? Therefore, He says, beware lest the letter of the word slay you, but truth will quicken you. So when I read, I find so many wonderful things, because they are all hidden away in there. I feel that it is spirit and life penetrating and pushing through these stories. They are beautiful and fascinating, but don't rest there. Always know that every word is inspired, every word is carefully put there, and even their conversations are arranged by God. Our translators sometimes have been a little faulty because they don't give you a too clear translation from the original language. Sometimes they blur it. But that isn't God's fault. God put it in the original as He wanted it. Never disturb it. If you don't understand the words or the arranging, please let it alone to someone who does understand it.

Let's go back to this marriage at Cana. Did you ever look at that little drama close up? Find the actors and see how they spoke and acted. It isn't casual. Who is it that takes the initiative when the emergency comes? Mary. Of course, why not. Who is the first one mentioned in the story? Mary. Do you know there is a reason? This is going to tell the story of Jesus and His first miracle and He's going to give us some profound teaching that's going to last me for 2,000 years. Why not start the story, "And Jesus came forth..."? No. Mary was there. That's the first salute. The disciples and Jesus, dear Jesus was there also.

Mary is mentioned first and there is a reason for that. It has to be that way. Because it is a dramatic picture telling us some things that we ought to know even today. Remember, it is not just a story. . .it is spirit and life trying to find a vehicle. How did Jesus answer? Mary takes the initiative, it isn't her business so she has presumed. How did Jesus speak? "Now, mother, be quiet"? No! "Woman, what have I to do with thee." If she is His mother, why didn't he call her mother? He can't. He couldn't possible say mother. Why? Because He is giving us a dramatic picture of spiritual reality, which would be absolutely ruined if He had said mother. He said woman. Well, I won't get into that story. How many would have like to let me loose in there for awhile? Well, I think I've given you something you haven't had a hold of.

God's word, the truth that He is bringing to this old world, is in essence and reality, spirit, it is life. But it can only come to you through the medium which I will give you. Here is the word, but if you care for it just as it is, it will slay you. If you will let the spirit and life that seeks expression through it to you,

you shall live. And then you'll live.

The first thing we found in yesterday's lesson was something very pleasing. "And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God; He stood by the lake of Gennesaret." That seems like a casual thing, doesn't it? That sound like a very casual statement that He was standing thereby the lake of Gennesaret and the multitude pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God. But, we found yesterday that there is such a thing as a field of motivation and it is your attitude of heart that will either close God or open Him. When the multitude pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, how many know it released Him instantly. It didn't say they pressed upon Him for a miracle. No, He'll give the miracle, but please let Him have the word first, then He brings in the miracle. After He had talked to them and given them a lovely lesson, well then He said, "Push out and get your miracle." And they all went home with a miracle. It was nice to have a miracle, I'm glad they did, but wouldn't it have been nice if they could have gone home with a message and not have to have had a miracle tied down to the tail end of it. But you know how flesh is. Or don't you know? Well, travel with me around the world and you'll begin to feel something how it is.

So, when the multitude pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, they released Him instantly and they sat down and He could minister. Why? The motive in their heart released Him and He could talk. I also gave you the illustration of the multitudes up on the mountain side and all they wanted was fish and bread. If all they wanted was a miracle then Jesus can certainly give them miracles and He did. But He perceived something. He perceived that they would like to channel this power into a political situation and put Him on a throne. He perceived that they would like to make Him king and with His power to make bread and fish He could answer the economic problems of Israel. When He perceived that they would by force make Him that king, He absolutely left them and went into the mountains alone and they sat there eating their miracle. Do you know that He didn't stand up and preach to them either? Because they had stomachs and no ears. That's right. A lot of people have stomachs and no ears, and God will fill their stomach. He's able. He didn't say anything to them; He just left them with a lovely miracle.

In these illustrations, you had two fields of motivation. One group was motivated correctly by a

pressing to Him to hear. And that multitude, he just sat down and opened His heart and taught them. The other multitude had an entirely different motive, the idea of channeling the power and making it do things. He hadn't anything to say to them.

"And they saw two ships standing by the lake and the fishermen were out washing their nets." Your "net" is your method by which you catch fish and some methods need cleansing horribly. I wish I could have a clothes line from here to Jerusalem with all the fish nets that the people are using today to catch fish strung on it. Then I'd like to have the Son of righteousness to shine in all of His glory and the wind of the Holy Spirit to blow and clean them up. Some don't know that their nets need cleansing and they are still clattering around with them.

"He entered into the ship and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land." There are some commands in here, three of them. The first command is to thrust out a little from the land, because this teaching that He's going to give and the miracle which is going to come out of the conclusion of this thing is not a thing which pertains to our natural habitat. The land, this is our natural habitat, this is our natural reasoning. The land is the earth, I am of the earth and you are too. We're made of dust. But, He says I don't want this thing in acted on land, in your flesh. You will have to be separated from flesh. Push out from the shore. There has to be the initial separation from the old creation, old thinking, old habit of life. This is the realm of Spirit; you work with different laws, different principles, different technique absolutely.

He says now, get in here with me and we'll push out a little. Just enough to teach you at least the first beginnings of separation. That isn't yet out in the deep. No, it isn't. That may be salvation and Pentecost and some phase of consecration and some ministry and some work, but that is just your first little separation. So, when He begins that process of separation, it is initial. It is to introduce us into a new field where He's going to begin to talk. And so it said, "He sat down and taught them out of the boat." This is teaching and instruction.

Every bit of venture in the Spirit, moving from our little separation from flesh and nature, before you get that, there has to be a grounding in the word of God. He's going to develop them in faith, response, spiritual intuition, so that when he gets them out there they'll be able to move. Now in a few minutes

He's going to make another demand upon them, "Let down your nets." Another command, "Push out into the deep." Now, He's going to bring them to that but they have to have faith to meet it. How do you get faith? "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." You read this Word and read it carefully and it will turn your faith. It will take what little faith you have and it will enlarge it. So He begins to teach because He's going to make demands on them in a little while and you have to be qualified for them. Don't venture without your qualification because you're going to be frustrated and disappointed.

Do you remember the two ships? There was a ship in which it said, " And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away" Matthew 14:22. Do you know the other story? They followed Him to the ship. Do you see a difference. And you can start going into a storm and you'll find out. How many know an awful storm came up and they had a terrific time and they cried and called on the Lord. The Lord made me see something here. In one they followed Him and in the other He constrained them to go. How many know it is safe to go into a ship, and even though they have a terrible cyclone you're safe if you have been constrained to go in. How many know that heaven and hell can be let loose and you'll go right through if you've been constrained.

Tomorrow we're going to get these people out in this boat and we're going to get them really out in the deep places. He will have quite a little time maneuvering them around to get them there. However, He has a miracle up His sleeve which He doesn't tell them. He doesn't say, move out into the deep now, and I'll work a miracle for you. He says, you go out there and fish. How many know that He doesn't always tell us about the miracle? But sometimes he can't work the miracle because He can't get us to fish.

Now Lord, here we are. We've got all this broken bread again and we pray in the name of Jesus that you will cause each one to take a portion which is adequate. If it is a portion of correction, help us to be able to be corrected. It is something for our admonition, help us to take that. If it is for our strengthening, help us to be strengthened under the power of the Word and truth. It is something to entice us on God, help us to follow because thou hast said, "This is the way," and we will walk along with

thee. Therefore we will commit the Word to thee and ask that thou will bless it in every heart and life.

For Jesus sake, Amen.

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