

The Lord Is Holy

by Mary Peckham

Mary Peckham's sermon emphasizes the holiness of God and the necessity of repentance for His presence to be felt among His people.

Duration: 58:51

Scripture: Psalm 23:1, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 63:1-3, Hosea 5:15 - 6:3, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for the presence of God in our lives. He describes how we often become accustomed to the ordinary and miss out on the supernatural demonstration of God's power. The preacher shares a personal experience of witnessing his mother's emotional response to the word of God, which led to a transformation in their household. He also highlights the importance of acknowledging our offenses and seeking God's forgiveness, as well as the conditions that God cannot bless. The sermon is based on the scripture from Hosea 5:15 to Hosea 6:3.

Transcript

...that he was nervous, as I assure him that it's not something that men are, that there are ladies who are also nervous. Will you turn with me to the book of Hosea, book of Hosea and chapter 5. Sorry, I'm giving you difficult ones to find. Now, if you'll all be quiet for just a little moment, I want to ask a question, strange question.

Can you hear me? Because those who can't, can't hear me. Is it okay? Can you hear me? And those of you who are a bit deaf, I'm sitting at the back, it's your own fault. Don't know why deaf people sit in the back of meetings.

Maybe they're pretending they're not deaf. Okay, we'll read Hosea chapter 5. You know, it's amazing how sometimes when the word of God is read, it's so applicable to those who are present. On one occasion in Zimbabwe, I came to a meeting and I had to speak there, and I knew what my text was, it was from Hosea, and it was what we're going to speak about tonight.

But I hadn't refreshed my memory and read the chapter before I got up to speak. And I didn't know that night that there were two Roman Catholic priests sitting in the audience. And the chapter began, Hear ye this, O priests.

I'm sure they thought I'd particularly chosen it for them. Okay, chapter 5 of Hosea. Hear ye this, O priests, and hearken, ye house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king.

For judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mishpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all. I know, Ephraim.

And Israel is not hid from me. For now, O Ephraim, thou commitest whoredom, and Israel is defiled. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord.

And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face. Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity. Judah also shall fall with them.

They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him. He hath withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, for they have forgotten strange children.

Now shall a man devour them with their portions. Lo, ye the cornet in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah, cry aloud at Beth-Avon after thee, O Benjamin. Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke.

Among the tribes of Israel have I late known that which shall surely be. The princes of Judah were like them that removed the bound. Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment because he willingly walked after the commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth unto the house of Judah as rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian and sent to King Jareth.

Yet could he not heal you nor cure you of your wound? For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away. I will take away and none shall rescue him.

I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. In the reflection they will seek me early. Come, let us return unto the Lord.

For he hath torn and he will heal us. He hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us.

In the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth was prepared as the morning and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Ending at verse 3 of chapter 6 and God will add his blessing to the reading of his word. And that ham tonight was very soft and you know what salt does. It makes you thirsty.

Wouldn't you like some of it? Now, let us unite our hearts in prayer. Our Father, we do thank you for thy precious word. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

We thank you for this inestimable privilege that we have of listening to it in freedom, gathering together thus as those who are named by thy name. We pray thee, heavenly Father, that thy blessing may rest upon us. We don't deserve it.

We have no merit to plead before thee. But Lord, for Jesus' sake and for his glory, we pray that thy hand might be upon us tonight. Amen.

That last verse of chapter 5 of the book of Isaiah is a rather frightening verse. It says, I will go and return to my place. Now, it's God speaking.

And it is God speaking to his own people. And God is saying, I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. In their affliction, they will seek me early.

The whole tone of this chapter and of the book of Isaiah is judgment, judgment of God against a nation that had forsaken him and had turned to idols, to sin. And God withdraws himself from them, withdraws his presence. Now, there are occasions in the scripture when God did this.

You remember the time when there was filthiness in the holy place, in the temple, and the presence of the Lord, the satanic glory departed, went out towards the east. He withdrew his presence from amongst his people. Now, the point is this.

God cannot identify with sin. God is a holy God. The hymn writer said, Oh, how can I, whose naked sphere is dark, whose eyes are dim before the ineffable appear, and on my naked spirit bear the uncreated being? Eternal light, eternal light, how pure the soul must be when placed within thy searching sight.

It speaks not, but with calm delight can live and look on thee. No man hath seen God at any time. He is unspeakably holy.

You remember Isaiah in the sixth chapter. In the year that King Isaiah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one of six wings.

With twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

And the doorposts moved with the voice of him that spake. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. When you have a glimpse of the King in his glory, you cannot stand that for too long. I remember on one occasion during the revival in the Hebrides, the minister who was leading the service began to read from the scripture.

In Isaiah chapter 63, Who is this that cometh from Eden with dyed garments with thrombosera? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength. I that speak in righteousness, mighty to say, What for art thou red in thine apparel? And thy garments is one that treadeth the winepress. I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none to help.

I have trodden them in my anger, I have trampled them in my fury. I was a teenager at the time, and as the word of God was being read, I suddenly had a glimpse of him coming thrombosera with his garments dyed red. And I cried out inwardly, not outwardly, but inwardly I cried out, Lord, I cannot stand it.

I cannot take it. It is too much for me. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, cried Isaiah, for I am a man of unclean lips.

You see, he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and strengthened the temple. He heard these seraphims crying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. And he was gripped and he was moved and he was made conscious of who he was and what he was in the sight of a God who was infinitely holy.

And this God cannot identify with sin. So the first thing I see here is this, that there are conditions which God cannot bless. There are conditions which God cannot bless.

And these conditions you read of in this chapter. I've read them out. In verse 3, I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me.

Here is the God of whom David said, Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Whither shall I flee from thy presence? Though I ascend up into heaven, thou art there.

Though I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. Though I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, whither shall thine hand lead me? There was no escape from God. And so he says, I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me.

We can hide from one another, as we were hearing this afternoon. We can cover up our traps. And we might think that we have been very successful in covering up our traps.

But like Hagar said in the wilderness, Thou, God, seest me. Nobody else could see her. On the way in the wilderness, they sheltered him from the sun under a bush.

And she cried out and said, Thou, God, seest me. I know, Ephraim, Israel is not hid from me. For now, O Ephraim, thou commitest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

So it was all there. And God said, I will go and return to my place. I can't, I can't let this be.

Where there is defilement, I cannot bless. So they had mentioned Aachen this afternoon. And Samuel, he prayed all night.

But Samuel had to stop praying. Up, get you up, Israel of sin. There's no need for you to spend the night in prayer.

There's no answer to this, excepting the Spirit of God. Search out the sin, first of all. Israel is defiled.

Now, we're living in a world that is defiled, and has defiled. We can't go anywhere without being conscious of the defilement of sin in the world. And we can become so easily contaminated with it.

The language of the world. What comes over to us on the television, right into our lounges, right into our homes. People whom we would turn away at the door, come in through the street.

And there is defilement. And the one thing leads on to another. As Samuel said in Psalm 101, I will set no evil thing before mine eyes.

We do that, don't we? And we feast on it, don't we? Israel is defiled. This is a condition which God cannot bless. And verse 5, it says, And the pride of Israel doth testify to this face.

They were a proud nation. They were a proud people. But they had forgotten that this is one thing that God hates.

Pride. What have we to be proud of in the presence of God? And God cannot bless pride. And it testifies to his face.

In other words, it's not hidden. It's there, blazoned abroad. It's there for all to see.

That they are a proud people, that they are a proud nation. And God hates pride. So here is a condition which God cannot bless.

And he says, Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity. Judah also shall fall with them. Pride goes before a fall, doesn't it? And verse 6, They were a religious people too, but God couldn't bless that.

It says, They will go with their flock and with their herds to seek the Lord. What a show. What a wonderful show.

Here are people, and they're going with their flocks and with their herds, and they're going to seek the Lord, and they're a proud people. But they are defiled in the presence of God. And God cannot identify with them.

And he says, I will go and return to my place. They can carry on with their religious activities as much as they want, but I'm not there. What a tragedy.

And may I say in passing that this is the tragedy of the church today. That all the wheels are so well oiled that the activities go on, on and on and on they go. Someone said at the Gatechese Convention in England years ago that if the Holy Spirit were withdrawn from the church, 80% of its activities would go on unhindered because we know how to do it.

The problem is man is at the helm. A couple of decades ago, and maybe a little bit more, the church turned to entertainment instead of to prayer. And the entertainment is there.

The entertainment can be very professional, and it can be very costly. My son Colin was asked by a pastor from New York to come and observe their preparations for Christmas. Colin is Director of Music at our church in Edinburgh.

And this man was impressed with his music when he came, this pastor from New York, and he said publicly, he said, I want you, Director of Music, to come to New York and spend a couple of weeks there at our expense. We'll look after him. And so, of course, Colin was thrilled to do this.

He had never crossed the Atlantic before, and he came. And when he came back, he said, well, what did you learn, Colin? Well, he said, they spent \$90,000 on their preparations for Christmas. It was all very slick, and it was all very professional, and it was all very wonderful, but we could never, ever, even dream of attempting anything like that.

It is so costly. But it was, it was, it was a secular show with a religious flavor. Sometimes I say to my son, when he sees me, he likes the music.

He'd be just right. He's got a degree in music. And sometimes I say to him, well, Colin, you know, when we were in the midst of revival in the Hebrides, and they sang the Psalms, and there was no accompaniment, no organ, no piano, nothing at all, because they don't use musical instruments in the country, and they just used their own organs, and they sang.

And some of them couldn't sing for coffee. They couldn't, really. But everybody was so conscious of God that, well, it was music, whatever it was, because it was coming from the heart.

And as a teenager, I went into these services. I sat away as far back as a teenager, unsaved teenager, could get. And I sat there, and when the congregation began to sing, the Psalms had sent shivers down my spine.

And I literally shook with fear. Wow, if you could have heard that congregation singing the 72nd Psalm, in the last few verses of it, in the medical version, the Scottish medical version. His name forever shall endure, last like the sun at the chalice.

Men shall be blessed in Him, and blessed all nations shall Him call. And blessed be His glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let His glory fill.

Amen. So let it be. And I shivered with fear.

Do you know why? Because God was in the flesh. The Spirit of God was abroad. Now they could sing that at another time, other than revival time, and it would just be ordinary.

But the tragedy today is this, that we have so many ordinary meetings. We go through it all. We come on a Sunday morning.

We sit and we listen. And we go away as we came, accepting if we are hungry for God, we'll go away more frustrated, and more dissatisfied, and more hungry, because we get nothing. If the Spirit of God were removed, 80%, maybe more than that, could go on without let or hindrance.

I will go, says God. I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense. Oh, yes, they'll go with their religious activities.

They'll go with their flocks and with their herd to seek the Lord. And they can make quite an impression. They can make quite a show.

Others looking on might say, well, they're very religious. But He said, they will not find it again. And that is the whole purpose, is it not, of our work, that we might find Him, that we might get in touch.

You know the emphasis long ago now, alas, in prayer meetings was always with getting through to God. You know that terminology? The battle every Friday morning from half past nine till twelve o'clock in the college where we are in Edinburgh, it's prayer time. Every Friday morning for these hours, it's prayer time.

Then they have the half-night of prayer each term, and they have devotions through the day and so on, morning and evening and then lectures and so on. But the point of the Friday morning prayer meeting is just getting through to God, getting through into an awareness of God, getting through to the place where it's easier to believe than not to believe, where God breaks through and everything becomes real. God becomes real.

His promises become real. And the hand of faith reaches out to a God who is real. But he said they will not find Him with all the religious machinery and activity that is going on from day to day, from Sunday to Sunday, if there is sin in the country.

And then it says in verse 7, they have begotten strange children. They have begotten strange children. Now, how did they beget these strange children? They begot these strange children through their association with the surrounding nations, and God had forbidden them to associate with them.

And God refused to acknowledge their children. I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense. Remember in the time of Ezra, when the law of God was read from that pulpit of wood in the rain.

I love that. And the weeping and crying of the people as the law of God was read. That was revival.

They had rediscovered the law of God. Now, revival is not the discovery of something new. It is the return to the old.

It is the return to God. It's the return to the Word. Last Friday, Colin was preaching at the Christian Union in St. Andrews University in Scotland, there north of Edinburgh.

There were about, I suppose, 160 students there. And afterwards, one of the girls came to me and she said, you know, we have tried everything, but I think we need to come back to God. That is revival.

It's the return. And in Ezra's day, it was a return. They read the law of God from this pulpit of wood.

The rain was coming down. They were unconscious of the rain. It was a great rain.

But they were rediscovering the Word of God. And that resulted in, tragically, families breaking up, which never have been families. And some of the leaders in Israel had taken wives from the surrounding nations by whom they had children.

They had to say goodbye to them. That was hard. That was difficult.

But God is a holy God. They have begotten strange children. Am I wrong in saying that our shallow evangelism has begotten many strange children? In our country, certainly.

Many strange children. Yes, they have professed faith in Jesus Christ. They have made a profession of faith.

But there is no line of demarcation between them and the world. And we find in the church that we're getting closer and closer and closer to the world. And if you want to find the world, you can find it in the church.

And we're conforming more and more and more and more to the world around us. And we make the excuse that it is in order to win the world. But you don't save anybody from a pit by jumping in the pit with them.

You've got to stay out of it. I will go, and I will return to my place. There are conditions which God cannot bless.

And there is a catastrophe which man cannot avert. And it is disastrous. And that is the withdrawal of the presence of God.

Now, how can one explain this? What is the gauge by which you measure your Sunday morning, your Sunday evening service or your conference? I would measure it by this. I would measure it by my awareness of God's amen to the proceedings. In that he comes and he makes himself known and he is in

the midst of his people.

He'll only come if he's pleased. He'll only come if he's obeyed. The presence of God.

The presence of God in revival is everything. And if the presence of God in revival cannot be confined to an individual or a group or a church or a denomination, he's everywhere. Whether you're in a meeting or whether you're outside the meeting, God is abroad.

And one is so aware of this. Under conviction as a teenager, I was so aware of it walking along the road one day. Suddenly the words came to me and I wasn't aware at the time that they were in the Bible but I thought they must be.

Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And I was aware. I was so aware of it that I stepped onto the curb and from the curb back onto the road and I didn't know where to put my feet because I was so aware that the very creation of God was holy, that it had the imprint of his hand upon it and my consciousness was this, that I had no right to be there, that I had no merit to be walking on God's earth, that I didn't belong there, that I was an alien.

I was a sinner in the sight of a God who was infinitely holy. I've come out of revival meetings and couldn't speak a word, nor could the folk who were with me. You moved out en masse, out of the meeting, out into the night, and nobody spoke.

There was that quietness. You know, we had a preacher, a Welsh preacher last week or the week before, staying in our home. Vernon Hyam.

And he told us of the 1904 revival and some of the things that happened. And he told us this remarkable story, that one night the sky was filled with heavenly hosts visible for the breadth of 20 miles and seen by thousands of people. The heavenly hosts, which they couldn't describe, but they could hear the most beautiful singing, indescribable singing.

Now, I've heard of that before. And what a wonderful experience. Now, the people who saw this, who were unsaved, did not get saved because of that.

They didn't get saved. But the people who were saved, those who knew the Lord, were deeply blessed and enthralled with this vision of the heavenly host. There is joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over one sinner that repented.

And it was as if God had broken free over Wales and over this certain area of Wales. And they could hear the heavenly singing. They could feel the joy in the heavenlies as God looked down upon 100,000 souls who had come to Christ during that revival.

The presence of God. Oh, we're content with so little, aren't we? Content with so little. And the tragedy is, we don't miss the presence of God.

We don't look for the presence of God. We don't look for his amen, as it were, from heaven to what is happening on earth. What did Jesus tell us to pray? He said to us to pray, Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And that is why we describe revival sometimes in saying heaven came down on souls and glory crowned the masses. In the Isle of Skye some years ago, the saints met together to pray night after night, every night for three months.

And as they were assembled one night, there was a strange but sweet fragrance that filled the meeting. And the people were conscious of this fragrance and they looked around and they wondered where this fragrance was coming from. They were very conscious of the presence of God, but they couldn't describe and they couldn't explain this fragrance.

Some of them left the meeting afterwards and on their way home in the car, no one particular couple, they had to go off the road with a car because the fragrance filled the car by garments smelling of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces, San Francisco. And that became a reality in that movement of the spirit. Strange things can happen.

But oh, we don't miss the presence of God. We are so used to the ordinary. We are used to ourselves singing and praying and all the rest of it.

But we don't miss that demonstration of the supernatural where our hearts are blended and bound together and the Word of God flows freely like a river, the liberty of the Holy Ghost. Hearts are melted and hearts are blessed. I remember as a teenager sitting at the back of the church keeping my eye fixed, I was unsaved, keeping my eye fixed on my mother who was sitting down in the middle of the church.

And I thought, as long as this conversion disease doesn't come to our house, I'm okay. And so I kept my eye on my mother, watching to see her reaction to the Word. And I saw my mother taking out her handkerchief and beginning to wipe her eyes and to weep.

And I thought, oh, it's coming to our house. When we went home that evening, there was a strange stillness in the house. Nobody knew what to say to anybody.

We didn't know what to say to Mother. We didn't understand what was going on in her mind and in her heart. Presence of God.

Oh, the things that happen. God can do in a moment what we've been trying to do for 50 years. When He comes, the mountains flow down at His presence.

The catastrophe which man cannot avert, the withdrawal of the presence of God. Something else, the contrition which God demands. I will go and return to my place, verse 15, till they acknowledge their offense.

Till they acknowledge their offense. Aren't you glad that that word till is there? Aren't you glad that that's not the end of the story, that God can come? And that it is God's delight to come till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face? Ah, that's it. In Psalm 18, the psalmist cries out, Oh, to the shepherd of Israel.

And he cries out to him that his face might once again shine. And that once again God would return. And didn't the hymn writer say to return? Oh, holy dove, return, sweet messenger of rest.

I hate to sing, but may they mourn and throw me from my breast. Return, holy dove. The contrition that God demands.

When nothing else works in bringing God into our assemblies, contrition will work. To this man will I look, God says, to the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit and tremblet at my word. That's the kind of people that God is looking for in the church today.

Contrite people. People who know what it is to cry. People who know what it is to break before God.

People who know what it is to mourn over their sin. And people who know what it is to identify with the sin of the land and with the sin of the community. And come like God's servant of old before him to plead.

Like Moses. And if not, he said, if not, if not, then blot me out of thy book. People like the apostle Paul who said, I would that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake.

People who feel. People who mourn. People who cry that desperate cry.

Oh, that thou wouldst rend heaven. Come, thou whom my soul adores. Exchange thy throne for my poor, longing heart.

A contrition which God demands. Is it being amongst us here? Is it in your hard hearts? A new heart will I give you with redeeming secret, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take the stony hearts out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of fear.

A tender heart. A loving heart. You know, Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet.

Oh, he cried that mine head were water. That mine eyes were a fountain of tears. That I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.

What a prophet. Mine eyes a fountain for lust, which he weeps for. A contrition which God demands.

Acknowledging their effects. We cannot but identify with the sin of the land. Oh, we may not be personally guilty of the things that they are doing, but why are they not taking note of us? Are we not the ones and there's something wrong with us? Are we not the ones that are hindering the flow of blessing? God must come to his people first.

The first sermon that Duncan Campbell preached in Varos, I was told, I wasn't there, was, I will say to Zion first. In other words, I will speak to my own people first. And God's people responded.

That first meeting was hard and difficult. But as the people moved out of the church, disappointed that the meeting was so hard, one elder stood on the steps of the church in the midst of the crowd. He lifted up his hands to heaven and he began to cry to God, Oh God, are you going to disappoint us? We have been preparing for this moment.

We've been believing for this moment. And he cried to God, he literally cried to God, standing there as the congregation were moving out. And as one man they turned back and came into the church and revival broke out.

God found a broken heart and God is looking for a broken heart and this is what God demands. Can we have something else? A confusion which God ordains. He says in their affliction, they will see fear.

Sorrow tracketh wrong as echo follows song on and on and on. Sometimes God has to deal very hard with His people before they will come to Him. I remember a story that Duncan Campbell used to tell us and it stuck all these years in my mind about a man who was resisting God and continually refusing to bow the knee to God.

God was speaking to him. Then one day this man's little son ran out on the street and right into the path of a car and it hit him. And the father ran out and he picked up his little son and he was killed instantly.

And he carried him lovingly into the room and laid him on the bed and he threw himself across the little body and he cried, Oh God, I'm coming now. Oh God, I'm coming now. In their affliction, they will seek me early.

It's a fearful thing, my friend, to fall into the hands of the living God. It's a fearful thing to resist the Spirit of God. God is not mocked.

But soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. God is in earnest. For if we continue to resist, God brings affliction.

Sometimes it's a minor affliction. Sometimes it's a more heart-breaking one. Sometimes it's a temporary measure.

Sometimes it's a permanent thing. But God is in it. I think of a young man who was running away from God when we were having a mission in his district in the island of Tyree.

And this young man came to the meetings and God was speaking to him. And he was resisting the Spirit of God. So he decided that he would conveniently take a ship then, like Jonah of old.

He had been in the merchant navy. And he knew that all he had to do was to go down to England and sign on a ship, and off he would go. And he felt that was the answer.

And he did it. And he sailed on that ship across to New York. And they berthed in New York, and he came down the gangway to spend the evening forgetting about the mission and what God was saying to him.

And at the foot of the gangway was a missionary asking him to come to a meeting. Whether shall I flee from thy presence? He went to the meeting. He didn't yield to God.

The ship was coming back to Britain. And he thought, No, I'm not going to leave the ship. I'll just continue on.

Because these girls are still conducting their mission on the island. And his brother was saved, and his sister-in-law was saved, others of the family. So, no, he wasn't going to go home.

And on the way back, he was slipping with ringworm. And, of course, he was discharged from the ship. And all he could do was to come home.

And when he came home to the island, the mission was still continuing. So his brother said, Are you going actually to the meeting tonight? Well, reluctantly Archie came. It was a stormy night.

The meeting was over. People had gone. And we were sweeping up the hall, clearing things up.

And suddenly the door burst open with Archie's pushing and the pushing of the wind. And then he slammed it behind. And I can still see him with his back to the door, standing there looking at us and the tears running down his cheeks.

He said, I want to be saved. Well, you see, God had followed him along the way. And God dealt very tenderly and gently with him.

As I say, it's not so tender. God is always tender. But it doesn't seem like that.

In our church in Edinburgh, Charlotte Chapel, recently one of the pastoral teams, a young man of 37 from Wales with a wife, two children, another little one on the way, and he came and he ministered for a number of months. And then he had these terrible headaches and was taken to hospital, discovered there was a tumour in his brain. And while he was in hospital, his little baby was born, a little son.

He had two daughters. And they brought the little baby to him in the hospital. They operated, removed 95% of the tumour.

It wasn't malignant. Sent him home. Then he collapsed, taken back into hospital, and they discovered a rare thing.

I think there was only one case in the whole world, and I think it was in America, of this particular tumour that was growing and behaving as if it was malignant, but it wasn't malignant. And he was dying. And when he was dying, somebody came in and talked to him.

Said, well, how do you feel? Well, he said, I'm not saying why should this happen to me. I'm just saying why he did not happen to me. In other words, he recognized God's hand in it somehow.

It's very hard to leave a wife, two children, a newborn baby. And the newborn baby was spitting at him. He even had the dimple in his chin.

Just the same. Beautiful child. But God took him.

God took him home to be with Christ, with his father. And how about the wife? She has related wonderfully to the whole situation. And I'm certain of this, that the whole situation has brought her closer to the Lord, and she sees the hand of God in the door.

Sad. Yes. But that affliction didn't particularly fit into this situation that we have before us.

God has his own ways of dealing with different people. But oh, how sad when a person is resisting God and God has to put his hand down on him. Fearful thing to fall into the hand of a living God.

Confusion with God or demons. And the judgment of God fell upon the nation of Israel and has fallen upon the nation of Israel to this day. His blood was said to be upon us and on our kin.

And who has suffered more from the people of God down through the centuries? But it doesn't stop there. Look at the comfort which God bestows. Come.

In chapter 6. Come and let us return unto the Lord. Now this is the key to revival. It's as simple as that.

Come and let us return to the Lord. For he hath torn, that's the affliction, and he, and he alone will heal us. He hath smitten, he says, but he will bind us up.

The same one who has smitten us will also bind us up. After two days will he revive us. In the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight.

And then shall we know if we follow it. We follow on to know the Lord. The comfort which God bestows.

Oh, who can describe it? The comfort that God bestows. I often look back upon these times of revival and I think of the thunderings of God's judgment in these meetings. Though the wicked join hand in hand, they shall not go unpunished.

Though the wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God. And in these meetings, you felt as if you were on the very precipice of an endless judgment in hell itself. And the condemnation of God was being pulled out on sin.

And the word sin was constantly in the vocabulary of the picture. Sin and death and judgment and eternity. And it felt as if eternity was not so far away.

One of the old Gaelic hymns translated into English, two verses of it, let me give it to you. Could I count each heavenly star, each blade of grass that grows on land, each drop in ocean near and far and every little grain of sand. And could I take each one so sure and a thousand gears against it lay, still would eternity endure as though it started yesterday and it was a reality.

We've lost the consciousness of eternity. But the consciousness of eternity and of eternal things returns in a time of revival. Because we have returned to God.

And God is a reality. And eternity is a reality. And then from these meetings, where souls were crushed and broken and people sat with their heads on the pew and their handkerchiefs were out and their tears were flowing freely, tears of contrition, from that meeting we would go into the meeting for those who were concerned.

And oh, the balm of Gilead was poured out as the preacher would speak on the subject of it. And the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abraham. And the reality of forgiveness.

The tears would be wiped away and faces would glow and shine with the assurance of salvation. And the song of the Lord would begin and spontaneously they would sing, now none but Christ can satisfy. None other name for me that love and life and lust enjoy Lord Jesus found in thee.

The balm of Gilead was being poured out. The comfort which God bestow. Are we today in the church denying ourselves these things? Because we are not willing to pay the price of repentance and seeking God and seeking him until we find him.

He shall seek me and he shall find me, said Jeremiah, when ye shall search for me with all of your heart, all your heart. Are we half-hearted in this thing? Are we quite content to just string along with the crowd and go through the motions of religious ceremony? Are we content with that? Our hearts long to see his face shining once again and to experience the balm of forgiveness in our lives. Let us pray.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains and the hills were brought forth, forever thou didst form the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting. Thou art God.

The heaven of heavens cannot complain thee. Thou art omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. Thou art over all.

Thou art our creator and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the only way, the only truth, the only life. Lord, solemnize our hearts in thy presence.

Break our hearts in thy presence, we pray thee. We pray, Lord, that thou will break up this hollow ground, cause the plough of grace to dig deep into our hearts, and we pray thee, Lord, that throughout this night, if we are conscious of nothing else, we may be conscious that God is hovering over us. And may it please thee, Lord, in thy mercy, to bring us into that awareness once again that will set us free, set us free from the sin that so easily beset us, set us free from the contamination and the defilement of sin, and set us free to serve thee in spirit and in truth.

God, meet our need tonight, we pray thee. We have nothing and we can do nothing. We look not on our own limitations, but we look our God to thee, for from thee cometh our help, our safety cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth, to send, O Holy God, to send sweet messengers of grace.

O God, the psalmist said, O my God, early will I seek thee, my flesh longs for thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, in a dry and a thirsty land where there is no water. Lord, we thank thee for thy word, and we pray that the solemnity of it may follow, and that we, I, may never be content with just the externals of religion, but we might come into that consciousness of what God is, who God is, and what God can do.

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