

A Mirror Covered With Water

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the Christian journey from forgiveness to intimate fellowship with God, using the tabernacle as a metaphor for spiritual growth and self-examination.

Duration: 51:56

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 1:27-28, Hebrews 9:3

Topics: "Exodus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with God and being transformed by His word. He challenges the audience to examine their spiritual growth and intimacy with God. The speaker uses the assembly of the tabernacle as a metaphor for the Christian life, highlighting the significance of Jesus as the door and the heavenly dweller. He also discusses the symbolism of the blue curtain representing the creator and the white linen representing the purity of Christ. The sermon concludes with a reminder to look to the cross for forgiveness and transformation.

Transcript

On August the 12th, I asked you to turn to Exodus chapter 40, and tonight I'm asking you to do the same thing. We saw in perspective what I would rather think the Lord would have us see tonight in detail. This 40th chapter is the assembly of the tabernacle.

I presented it to you as the pattern of the Christian life and trusted that by means of it you would be able to locate how far you've grown, how far you've gone in God's intended purpose. How we saw that the four hangings on the gate, the five pillars and the four hangings, spoke to us of the character of our Lord Jesus, who said, I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.

There was the hanging of blue, the blue curtain, speaking to us of the celestial heavenly dweller, the one by whom all things were made, the creator and the sustainer of the universe. There was the white linen with the embroidery work of the fine twine, linen it was called, which spoke to us of our Lord in his purity, God who became flesh, living a sinless life. There was the hanging of scarlet, which spoke to us of our Lord in his sacrifice, the hanging of lavender, of purple, which spoke to us of our Lord enthroned, reigning, ruling with all authority in heaven and earth in his hands.

This is the door, he said, by me if any man enter in, unto as many as received him. And this is the one we present to sinners, this is the one whom they received, the one who made the universe, the one who lived

a sinless life, who died an atoning death, and was gloriously and triumphantly raised from the dead. This is Christ whom we preach.

He is all of this and more, and one has to receive him. You couldn't take one panel down and tuck it under your arm and say, I'm going in here, going in there. It isn't Christ the four doors, it's Christ the door, and he is a person, and we just have to accept all of these aspects of his character and work.

Then we saw the altar of burnt offerings speaking to us of the cross. To those who receive his person, they benefit from the work of his cross. He died that we might live.

There, God's justice and his mercy met, and our Lord Jesus died just for the unjust, that he might bring us to him. We saw this at the altar of burnt offering. Then there was a tabernacle.

There was a building. It had two rooms, 15 by 15, the innermost room, and the outer room 15 by 30. The innermost room, the holiest of all, had the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat with the outstretched wings of the cherubim.

Once a year, the high priest would go with not without blood and make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people. This spoke to us of that place of personal, intimate, glorious revelation of God to our heart. In the holy place, there was the table of showbread, the sufficiency of Christ, the altar of incense for the place of prayer, the many spices and ointments in the incense speaking to us of the different kinds of prayer, prayer of confession, the prayer of thanksgiving, prayer of praise, prayer of petition, all of this seen in the ointment or in the incense on the altar.

And then there was the candlestick by a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who alone can lead us in our prayer and can illumine the word to our heart's need. Now, I've omitted one article of furniture, and it's that to which I would bring you tonight. Between the altar of burnt offering and this holy place, and the holiest of all, was a brass basin lined with mirrors, filled with water.

Now, we do not know the dimensions of this. Without dimensions, because apparently God wanted us to know that there was no limit to his grace and his mercy, and so he didn't prescribe the diameter, the width, the height. We just assumed that it was a considerably large basin.

I would estimate that it was probably 10 to 12 feet in diameter. Perhaps not, but it could well have been. Lined with mirrors, silver had been placed and polished on the bottom, filled with water, with spigots on the side, faucets on the side, from which the water could be drawn.

Now, dear friends, if all God wanted you to have in your Christian life was forgiveness and pardon, all there would need to have been in the tabernacle, in the court, would have been the altar of burnt offering. If all that there was to have been your provision was forgiveness, justification, relief from the burden and pressure of past sins, there would not have to have been anything else. But you see, God's purpose wasn't just to keep you out of hell, you heard me say that, but to bring you into vital, living, transcendent, glorious union with him here and now.

And so there had to be preparation. And the preparation for going on into this which is God's goal for you, the holiest of all, since the temple, the veil has been rent, and you have your high priest there, he has said that he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. And the place to which he's leading and taking you is the heavenlies.

This is where he wants you to come, into this third heaven of fellowship with him. This is his desire. This is his goal.

And so you have to ask yourself, how far have you come? Have you received him who is presented by the gate? I trust you have. Have you come to the offering? Well and good, fine. But did you stop there? Did you stop at the place of forgiveness and pardon? Have you gone on to the word of God as it's pictured by the table of showbread, to feed upon that word alone? You know the little turtle doves are fed by their mothers.

They eat the food, chew it or digest it, whatever manner the Lord's provided for turtle dove. And then when they come home, the little doves sit at the edge of the nest and open their beaks, and the mothers will give them this pre-digested food. And this is how they're fed.

It's a good way for turtle doves, but how long has it been since you have been able to go to the word of God and feed yourself on the living bread? How long has it been since you have been able to take this book and find the spirit of God speaking to your heart out of the book? Do you have to have these commentaries and these notes, these books? Has the word become illumined by the spirit of God's to your heart? Do you feed on it? Do you have something to give people in the day that you meet because God gave you something? What about prayer? Do you really have a life of prayer or do you pray out of a sense of duty? Have you come into the holy place? Have you gone that far? Have you gone into the place of intimate union and fellowship with God as it's spoken of by the holiest of all, which is his goal for us? And we sang, my goal is God. My goal is God. My goal is intimate fellowship with him.

Dr. Tozer speaks of a book, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. I believe the author is unknown, but whoever it was, a devout heart indeed, who said there comes a time when you've passed the point of words and thoughts and ideas, but in the presence of God, you've just entered into the cloud of unknowing. You've just come to the place where worship flows because you see him and know him.

This is where he wants to bring all of us. Perhaps you've known in some time past this, but he wants us to dwell there. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high.

Where's the secret place? Here. He's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. I remember years ago hearing a preacher say, well, you see, what we're trying to do is get the job done.

Well, what was it in his mind? Well, the job done was to get people converted. Pity that Paul didn't understand that. I'm sure he wouldn't rob Paul of having had a great burden for the unsaved.

But Paul didn't say that getting the job done was to get them converted. That was to leave them back there at the altar of burnt offering. Oh, no.

He says, Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He wanted to take them on, on into the holy place, but on into the very holiest of all. There is the place where spiritual blessings abound.

Oh, you can get soulish blessings out here. You can get the blessings of your intellect and of your mind and of your emotions out in the outer core. But the spiritual blessings are in the heavenlies.

And the heavenlies are the third heaven, as we would see it here, the holiest of all. That place of personal intimate fellowship and union with him. Now, if you've been born of God, you want to go all the way.

You're not prepared to stop. You're not prepared to settle down. You know, I think someone, there's something radically wrong with a person.

If they're content to sit down out there by the altar of burnt offering and see the pile of stones covered with the frame and the cornice to which the horns, to which the offering was tied, a lot of soot out there, a lot of ashes out there, a lot of dirt blowing around out there, odors of burning flesh. Can you imagine someone that says, oh, well, that's all I'm interested in really, just so that I know my sins are forgiven, just so that I know I'm pardoned. And so they sit there year after year after year, and they see the fire consume the sacrifice and the smoke ascend, and they know that their sins are forgiven.

But you see, wouldn't this betoken the fact that they're only interested in what they want in Christ, rather than interested in what he wants in them? He doesn't, he put the altar of burnt offering there, but he put something else. My, the glory of the holy place. Here are the boards made of acacia wood, fitted together little pieces.

Have you ever read the dimensions of these boards? I'll tell you a secret, there wasn't an acacia tree in the whole land where it grows from which you could have cut one board. I saw this past week a board about 24 inches wide cut out of an enormous tree. It was a lovely board.

But I'll just wager that you could hunt all over the area where the acacia tree grows and couldn't find a board 12 inches wide and 12 feet long. Just didn't grow. Acacia is a little gnarled, twisted tree.

You know how they made those boards? They just take a piece out here and cut it and fit it into a piece over here, fit them smoothly and nicely together. Then you take a piece here and fit it in there. And that board was made out of small pieces that were fitted together.

And it speaks of the habitation of God to the spirit, for it was wood covered with gold. It speaks of that wonderful thing to my heart, the church. And so it is that there was to have been a place for you in his body, the church.

And there he'd gathered together you and me and the others of us and he just fitted us together in such a way that it could be covered with gold and it could become a board in the tabernacle. Speaks of the church. And these blessings that we have are there found in the church's body.

And everything that you receive you're going to receive because he's called out a people to himself. They won't be apart from the church, they're in the church. But you see there has to be in addition to the church, there has to be the light of the Holy Spirit.

And then there has to be a personal application. Wonderful things are there for you, great spiritual blessing. What stands in the way? Well you see between the altar and the holy place was the labor.

What was the purpose? It was to prepare people to go on with God. This is what it was. It was put there so that people that had been pardoned and people that had been forgiven would have the hindrances taken away so they could go on with God.

It was symbolized by the Lord Jesus that night in which he was betrayed after the supper, girding himself with a towel, taking a basin and a pitcher of water and sitting down at his disciples' feet and washing them, pouring the water on their feet, wiping them, and then going on to the next. And Peter seeing him said, Lord you can't do that to me. Then he says, you have no part in me.

If you don't want me to wash your feet, then you mean you have no part in me. And my friend, if you're not willing to come to the labor, then it means you have no part in Christ. If you just say, well I want a hell insurance policy but I don't want to be clean, he said, you have no part in me.

You haven't either. If you've been born of God, then you want to be clean and you want him to wash your feet. Then Peter said, wash me all over, Lord.

He said, no you don't need that. You just need your feet clean because you've already been washed. If you haven't been washed all over, you've no part in me.

So it comes between the altar of birth offering and the door of the tabernacle. And it is only for people that have been pardoned and forgiven. You know someone has said, and you frequently hear it, well all the good people are in church.

Well nothing could be further from the facts. It's the good people that are outside. It's the bad people that are in church.

It's the people that were so horribly ruined by sin that they knew they couldn't do anything to help themselves and were prepared to come and cast themselves at the feet of the Lord Jesus and ask him to pardon them and forgive them and make them whole. These are the people that are in church. Well now because you've been forgiven and pardoned, did that change you? No, it didn't change you at all.

You were forgiven of your past sins. But what about you? What about the future? Here at the altar of birth offering, all that great accumulation of guilt that is yours from the years past, you carried to this place and the Lord Jesus died. The past was put away and he said he'd remember your sins against you no more forever.

And so in his eyes you stood there justified. But what about the next day when you failed the Lord? When you got angry or you resorted to some habit of the past and lied to escape from consequences or disobeyed the Lord some way? That's sin. You were walking and so you got dirty.

Now what are you going to do about it? Oh well my sins are forgiven, that's all there is to it. No, you see God put the laver there between the cross and the place of fellowship. Every day the priest had to come to the laver, stand over it, lean over it, and look into it.

The mirror on the bottom would show him what he couldn't otherwise see. He could see his hands. You see there are some things that you know that you do wrong.

Oh when you do something that you know is wrong, there's no question about it, you can see it. You reach over to the stove and you take your hand away and there's a big black smudge on it, you know it's wrong. You don't need anything further, there it is.

You're dirty. Your feet get this dust and you look at them and they're dirty. But you see all that we do to grieve him whose name is holy isn't quite as obvious as this.

And so God's had to give us a mirror whereby we can see more deeply than we would otherwise be able to see and see areas of our heart and life that we couldn't see. So here's this laver that is lined with mirrors so that we can see that which would not otherwise be observable by us and we can deal with it. Now everyone knows that when they lose their temper, when they become cruel or brutal or selfish or proud or

arrogant or lustful or whatever it is, there's sin.

It's all over the hands, all over the feet, perfectly obvious. There was provision made for that, but there's some other things that just aren't that that obvious. One of the things that you have to see at the laver is your motives.

And this is where you have to come. We don't know our own hearts. God knows we don't know our own hearts and so God wants to show them to us.

I hear people often say, you know the reason why he did that and then they proceed to say something that only God is qualified to say. If you're ever tempted to tell why somebody did something, I hope you'll stop in time because you know to say that you know why someone did something is to say that God and I are on the same level in the same plane. The only thing you can possibly say is what was done.

Please, please, for your sake, do not make such a presumptive claim to deity as to say I know why he did that. You see, you have to stand out the human heart. You don't know why anybody does what they do.

You may know what they did, but you don't know why they did it. And for you to say that you know why they did it is just going far beyond any proper limits. Because the fact of the matter is that very often the person doesn't know why he did it.

He doesn't realize why he did it. He just did it, that's all. He hasn't analyzed his emotions.

He hasn't analyzed his motives. He may have been something that he completely forgot. Wrong, sin, may have been something that just, well, it didn't seem it was what he didn't intend it the way it was meant.

Maybe it was something that seemed innocent enough, but deep down in his heart there was a great malignancy of feeling. And so since it's so hard, impossible for us to know why anybody else does something, and difficult for us to know our own hearts, it's necessary for us to have an x-ray machine whereby we can see what we couldn't otherwise see. And this is the labor.

For you see, it's not only a mirror, but it's a mirror covered with water. And the water speaks of us of the Holy Spirit. And the mirror speaks to us of the Word.

And it's the Spirit of God using the Word of God to try our motives. Now David was utterly sincere, and so when he went to bed one night, he said, Oh Lord, try my reins in the night season. Have you dared to pray that way? You know what reins are, especially you that had the good fortune of living where horses were.

It's awfully hard to find them these days. They seem to have disappeared, except under a saddle or something. But the days when people had to work horses, as I did as a boy back in Minnesota, go out before the sun was up in the morning and in the darkness of the barn, reach up for the familiar harness and put it on, fasten it with your eyes shut, and then lead the horses out, stand them together, buckle the reins together, and get them crossed and pull this way, and they turn that, and then have to go get off and fix them.

Oh, the reins are terribly important, because by that little ribbon of leather you control this large horse. You sat back on the seat of the implement, and these ribbons of leather were between your hands, and you pull this way, and the strap would carry the message up, and the horse's bit would turn its head a little, then he'd walk the way you turned his head. And so it is that God said through David that way deep down

in your heart you have things that steer you and govern you and direct you, and it's very difficult to analyze them.

And so he said, you have to, you absolutely must have your motives tested by God. Now let me ask you a question. You say, oh God, I want you to fill me.

I'm going to bring my empty earthen vessels clean through Jesus' blood, and I want you to fill me with your Spirit. And the question you have to ask yourself is this, now why? Why do I want to be filled with the Spirit? Why do I want God's anointing, God's presence, God's power? Well, perhaps you might say so that I can be an effective Christian, or I can be a successful servant. Many motives, but you know there's only one real proper motive, and that is that Jesus Christ should be glorified through your life.

And so as we come to the labor, and we lean over it, and we read the word, and we study the word, we ask the Spirit of God to illumine the word to our hearts, he's going to show us our motives. And he's going to deal with them until our whole life is brought to focus, and all of the energies and activities and plans, like the rays of the sun, are bent to a point. And the one point in the Christian life that God will recognize and honor is that of glorifying Jesus Christ.

By your recreation, and so this is bent. By your plans for your home, and this is bent. By your business, and this is bent.

And each of these rays have to be bent until they come to this one point of focus. You see, everything that God is doing today, he's doing to answer the prayer of the Lord Jesus, who said, glorify thou me with the glory I had with thee before the world was. And so if you want prayer answered, and you want your life enriched and blessed, there has to be a unifying of your life to this one point.

Now it's quite possible to say, Lord, do this, but there's a straight line. Your reason for wanting it is because you want it, and your motives thus have to be tested. And if you'll come to the word of God and ask the Spirit of God to teach you, he'll teach you, and he'll undisclose the motives of our heart that can only be shown there.

Then there's something else we need to see. We need to see ourselves, the kind of people we are. It's very easy for us to understand that to lie is wrong, and get dirty.

To steal is wrong, get dirty. But you know, many a person can say, oh look, I am dirty because I as a Christian have lied. And so in brokenness they come and say, Lord, I lied, forgive me for lying, and he does.

But you know, God's purpose isn't just to forgive us for what we've done, it's to save us from what we are. And so it's as we come to the word of God, and lean over the word of God, that God shows us the kind of people we are. We can see with our own eyes what we've done.

When you touch something that's dirty, you get dirty from it. When you do something that's wrong, you know that it's wrong. But God's purpose isn't just to show us repeatedly what we've done that's wrong, what we've said that's wrong.

The labor was that place where God could show us ourselves. And we would lean over this and look at it, and because there was water covering the mirrors, and the water speaks of the Spirit of God, and the mirror speaks of the word, it was the work of the Spirit of God through the word to show us ourselves.

Have you seen yourself? Now before you're going to go into the holy place, you've got to see yourself.

This is an indispensable. You've got to see yourself. We've been speaking to you for the last several weeks of our brokenness, but you know it's quite easy for one to become broken over the fact that their mind has been unclean, and they've used it in thinking lustful thoughts, or their words have been unclean or unkind, or they've been doing something else, and come and say, Lord, forgive me for this, and forgive me for that.

And we can't escape it. We've got to do that. We've got to do that.

And if tonight you know that there's unconfessed, unforgiven sin in your life, I assure you of this, that it's a roadblock in your life. And if you don't deal with it, you're never going to go beyond it. Just a dead-end street.

I've known people that have been 30, 40, 50 years under good, sound teaching, and yet in intimate conversation with them, you discover they've made absolutely no progress at all. Well, why? Well, you go back and find that 40 years ago, somebody hurt them, and they've been cherishing and nourishing this wound and injury for all these many years. It wasn't the thing that happened to them that was so bad.

It wasn't that someone hurt them in what they did. It's what they did to themselves. What you have, what happens to you, doesn't hurt you.

It's what you do about it. And so they've nourished this hurt, and they've cherished this life, and they've fed this injury, and it's gone 20 years, and 30 years, and 40 years, and they're right back there where they were. They made no progress whatever, because they didn't deal with the thing that was there.

And so it's quite necessary for me to say that all spiritual progress in your life is going to be determined by your keeping a broken heart. But you see, it's not enough just to see what we've done and deal with what we've done. God wants to go beyond that.

He wants to show us what we are. And so as we come and lean over the labor and look into this, the Word of God, for that's what it pictures, the Word of God begins to talk to us about us. It's rather ruthless.

God doesn't spare us, you know. He said, spare not a man. Slay the cattle and the beasts and everything precious.

God's found no way that he can make peace with the flesh, yours or mine or anyone else's. And so he doesn't spare us. And as we come to the Word, he begins to show us us.

And that's a terrible thing, most distressing, because pretty soon, you know, you feel almost depressed. Oh, look at this. Look at what the Bible says about me.

However will I get out of it? And sometimes people fail to recognize, however, the difference between the work of the Spirit of God and the depressing work of Satan. Now, you know how to tell the difference, I'm sure. Well, I'll explain it to you.

Satan's purpose is to discourage you, dishearten you, destroy you. And so his arguments always go something like this. You never do what's right.

You always are wrong. You never. You always.

And almost invariably, these are the two strings on his heart. He just puts one, never and always. Never do what you ought to do.

Always do what you shouldn't do. Plunk, plunk, plunk, plunk. That's all he has.

Two notes. You never and you always. Now, the Lord never does that.

He always does something else. You see, he's not trying to discourage you. He simply pulls your heart aside and says, see, that's what it is.

And you look at it and you draw back in horror and say, that's my heart. Why, the seed of every man's sin is there. There's nothing that anyone's ever done that I couldn't do.

Well, I thought I was a religious person. I thought I was a devout person. I thought I was an earnest, sincere Christian person.

And now to look at me, see what I see. Yes, that's what it is. And then he turns around and says, you know, I knew this when I called you to me.

You're surprised, but I'm not. And I loved you anyway. And then he whispers to you, see, I loved you when I knew the very worst about you.

And you're surprised by what you see, but I'm not. Now, the enemy says, see, God couldn't love anybody like you. Look at you, always disobey.

You never. Oh, not so our wonderful Lord. He just takes the knife of his word and cuts right down over the thin membrane of our casual sophistication.

And he peels it back and says, look at that heart. Do you see it? And you draw back in horror and say, look, even though I'm pardoned, even though I'm forgiven, why there isn't anything anyone's ever done that I couldn't do. And he says, yes, that's right.

Well, Lord, what am I going to do? And then he says, look at the cross, look at the cross. Well, what do I see there? Well, look at the backside of the cross. There you see that not only did the Lord Jesus die for you, but he died as you.

He became just what you see so that you could become just what he is. He was made to be sin for you. He who knew no sin.

And you were made the righteousness of God and that you might be made the righteousness of God in him. So when you see yourself and you get this overwhelmingly horrible view of what you are, then he says, look, this is what the Lord Jesus became. He not only died for you, but he died as you.

Always when the Lord shows us something of ourselves, he shows us something of the Lord Jesus. You remember the old viewers that grandmother had, the stereoptican viewers. You'd go on Sunday afternoon and she'd take these.

They never added it where I was. They never put a new card in there, the same one in the same order. And I knew what they were.

And every Sunday afternoon that we'd go, I'd have to sit down and sit there and hold this wooden thing with the glass, you know, and put it in and look at it. And you come away cross-eyed from having stared for all afternoon while the elders talk at these scenes. You were sure nothing was like that, but it was something to do anyway.

When the Lord Jesus takes the stereopticon of the word of God and through this eyepiece, he shows you you through this eyepiece, he shows you Christ. He never leaves you depressed. He always wants you to understand that you have to see yourself in order to see his son.

And you only appreciate his son in the degree that you discovered your need. And so he shows you the laver and you come and lean over the laver and here is reflected in from the word of God, your heart. And with Paul, you cry out and say, in me, in my flesh, there's no good thing.

Why, the things I counted gained to me, I count lost to Christ and count all things but refuse. Yes, that's right. You have to come to that place and that's where you see it in the word of God.

But then the moment that you say that I count all things but refuse that I may win Christ. Being made conformable unto his death, knowing him in the fellowship of his suffering and the power of his resurrection. One eyepiece shows you you and the other eyepiece shows you your Lord.

God always does this. But now you see, if you don't come to the laver, then all you're going to be doing through the days of your years is simply coming and drawing from the basin of his grace the water to wash off what you said. Lord, forgive me for losing my temper.

Lord, forgive me for having had unclean thoughts. And so you wash your hands today, but you never see your face. You never see yourself.

You have to come to the laver in order to see beyond what you've done, beyond what you've said into your heart. And then you discover that God has looked at you through the magnifying glass of his grace, and he found no good thing in you, and it didn't discourage him or dissuade him at all. He sent his love upon you, and he loved you when he knew the very worst about you, and he drew you to himself, and then he became what you were so that you could become what he is.

And so this is what you see at the laver. Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful thing it is to see yourself the way God sees you, and how easy it becomes then to break before him. Otherwise, you see, you're going to strain at trying to be better.

And you come to the place where you say, well, Lord, look, from the kind of a heart I have, what can there be but this? Here, you see, you wash your hands. You said, Lord, forgive me, and I'll never lose my temper again. You set your jaw, clench your fist.

Just forgive me this once, Lord, and I won't bother you anymore, I promise you. But you did bother him again, because all you saw was your hands. But when you come to the word of God and look into that, then he shows you you.

Well, you say, well, that's all you can expect, Lord. Failure. He says, that's right.

All I can expect from you is failure. All I can expect from you is defeat. That's all there is in you, and if you're just going to depend upon you, that's all I'll get.

But when you come to the labor and you see yourself, you say, well, now, Lord, where? Where from here? And he says, look back at the altar. And there you see that the one on the altar wasn't just there for you, but he was there as you. He didn't just put Christ there, he put you there.

You were there, crucified with Christ. And if you are prepared to see what he sees, then you can approach the altar from the other side. When you came in the door, all you saw was what you'd done.

But after you've gone to the labor, you look back and see what you are. And then you say, oh, how wonderful it is that I am crucified with Christ. He not only died for me, but he died as me.

Oh, what a relief. I don't have to carry the body of this death any longer. You know, the emperors of China established a rule once that if a man murdered, the victim, the one who was murdered, would have to be tied onto the back of his murderer.

And so here it would be that he carried someone right on his back, laced around, body to body, arm to arm, hand to hand, and he would walk through. And it was that by this means that he was punished until he would fall down because of the very corruption of his crime. And there are those, you know, that have carried the body of death.

This is what Paul said. Who's going to cut these lines? Who's going to cut these bands? Who's going to take the body of this death off of me? I can't carry it any longer. We come to the labor and we see that that body of death is not anything but you.

It's just me. It's what we are. What are we going to do about it, Lord? Who's going to deliver me from the body of this death? Well, then some writer with his book will say, sorry, friend, that's what it's going to be from here on.

Thank God that isn't what Paul said. Just as he cried out, oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? He cried out, I thank my God through Jesus Christ. Well, how was he delivered from the body of this death? At the cross.

For the Lord Jesus not only went there for him, but he went there as him. And dear heart, if you can realize that the day Jesus Christ died, you died. It's going to mean such relief to you.

But you mean to say that if I want to see that, I never need to come back again? Oh, no. Oh, no. You've got to keep daily returning to the labor.

And anything God shows you, you instantly deal with. And my friend, if this can become the habit of your heart, you say, Brother Redead, are you just saying now that there's nothing more in the Christian life than failure and cleansing and failure and cleansing? No, I'm not saying that at all. But I am saying that if you don't go to the labor, you'll never go beyond the labor.

If you don't come in brokenness to the place of cleansing, you'll never go beyond the place of needing cleansing. But if you'll come to the labor and see yourself and deal with what you see, then there's the door of the tabernacle and blessing within. But if you don't come to the labor, you never can go into the tabernacle.

If you don't see what you've done, if you don't see the motives of your heart that are contrary to his glory, and if you don't see what you are, you can't ever go into the holy place. The only ones that can go in are

the ones that have first come to the cross, and then they've come to the labor to see themselves. Then they can go in.

Then they can go in, but not until. My dear friend, many of you in past weeks have felt the spirit of God speaking to your heart in brokenness. You've broken before the Lord.

You've testified to his forgiving grace, his pardoning love. And you know that I've said to you again and again, you've got to stay here, but not in a final sense. The priests came daily to the labor, but that isn't as far as they went.

They went from the labor into the holy place. You couldn't go into the holy place without going to the place of brokenness. But having gone to the place of brokenness, you could go into the place of refreshment and deliverance and grace and strength.

Now I speak you in these terms. If you're not willing to break before God, if you're not willing to deal with everything he shows you, if you're not willing to wash your hands and your feet and lean over the labor to see your heart and deal with what God shows you, then you have set a roadblock in your Christian progress. If I see you 10 years from now and you don't come to the place of brokenness and confession and dealing with what God shows you, I know that you're going to be 10 years from now right where you are tonight.

Or you may have filled notebooks full of truth and doctrine. You may have memorized the whole New Testament. You may have been catechized on strong, shorter, on the strong theology and past.

But if you haven't come to the place of brokenness spiritually, you're going to be in right the same place 10 years from now that you are tonight. But if you're prepared to break before God, bend before God, bow before him, then you're going to find him taking you into the tabernacle, into the holy place. But what if you say, I go into the word and he begins to feed me, and I go into that place of prayer, what if I sin then? The priest went daily into the tabernacle, and every time they approached the tabernacle, they came to the labor.

And so there's got to be a daily brokenness. How far do you want to go with God? How far do you want to go with him? Well, if you've been born of God, you want to go just as far as he wants you to. Do you know what it's going to cost? Constant brokenness, returning to the labor again and again and again.

Whenever in attitude or action, you grieve him, you've got to come back. That's why it's there. But you see, the further you go and the longer you stay, the less you need the labor.

But whenever you need it, that's the place you have to come. Now let's look at it again. The destination wasn't the altar of burnt offering, the cross.

The destination is the holy place filled with the fullness of God in his presence. Have you gone there? Then you can't pass the labor. You've got to stop there.

Are you prepared to do it? If you are, there's cleansing. And cleansing isn't the end. It's just preparation to go on with God.

Let's bow in prayer. Now, Father, we're here before thee. We've talked about the fact that you understand us, you know all about us, and you love us when you know the very worst about us.

But there's nothing in us that shocks thee, though we often, seeing our own hearts, are appalled by what we see. But thou art not, for thou didst know it, and love us when thou didst know the worst about us. And thou wast willing to become what we were, that we might be made what thou art.

Now we're here in the company of people on this Labor Day weekend that are prepared to leave and go to our homes. Some, Lord, have looked into the mirror and seen what kind of man or person they are, and they're going to go away just the same. Now we love them, Lord, and we know thou dost love them.

But we know that if they do not deal with what they see, they're always going to be the same. It's going to be harder for them next time, it's just going to be more difficult. And if they're setting up a roadblock in their spiritual progress, and they'll never get beyond it, they can't go under it, they can't go around it, they can't go over it, that we must deal with what thou dost show us on thine own terms.

If we will, thou wilt meet us. Now show it to us tonight, Father. Father, how can a speaker make men and women hunger for thee? How can a preacher make people want to know thee in the fullness of thyself, so that they're willing to take the low place and break and bow and bend? All we can do is tell them, Father, what thy word says.

Then somehow, by the Holy Spirit, thou must put into their heart such an insatiable hunger to be all thou dost want them to be, and have all thou dost want them to have, that they're going to be willing to meet thee on thy terms. Father, show them that as they bow and bend and break and confess their sin and deal with everything that's before them, that as they see themselves and their motives and take the low place as being cross-worthy, that thou art not doing this to destroy us, but to deliver us and set us free. We can't ever be anything, but the Lord Jesus can be everything in us and to us, but he can only be what we let him be, and we're only going to let him be what we see we need.

And so, Father, will thou show to everyone here the great wisdom, the great wisdom of breaking, of coming to the cross, coming to the place of death, so that life can reign. Death is not an end, it's just a step to life. Brokenness is not an end, it's just a step to victory.

Let it be so tonight. Now, just this word of invitation. You know your heart, you know what God's shown you, and you know what you need.

You've come to the labor, perhaps you've seen the soil on your hands, what you've done, your feet, where you've been, but have you seen your motives? Have you seen yourself? Have you discovered that in you there's no good thing and you aren't any better now than you were when God saved you? You aren't. Are you at the end of yourself? Are you willing to say tonight, oh yes, I'm willing to break, I'm willing to come, I'm just finished with me. I want to go on, I want cleansing, I want deliverance from defilement within and without, and I want to be helped to go on into something more that God has for me.

And I'm willing to come to the labor, I'm willing to see myself, because I know that God isn't trying to hurt me, he's only trying to save me from myself, make me what I ought to be. If you're tired of yourself and your failure and your sin, you want cleansing that will lead you on into victory. I want you to do something tonight, I want you just to stand right where you are, and in your standing to testify to the discovery that God has given you of your own failure and sin and need, and that you're coming to the labor in brokenness for cleansing, that you can go on into victory.

Right now, while we wait, would you just stand and in your place say by standing, I'm ready for God's dealing, I'm ready to come to the place of dealing with everything he shows me. I want to go on, while we wait, just stand right now. Thank you, yes.

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