

# Hearts Desire

by Percy Ray

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*Percy Ray emphasizes the importance of heartfelt desire for salvation, personal cleansing, and the active flow of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.*

**Duration:** 1:02:53

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:11, Proverbs 4:23, Isaiah 12:3, Jonah 3:4, Matthew 6:33, Romans 10:1, Romans 10:4

**Topics:** "Salvation Desire", "Personal Testimony"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the different motivations people have for attending church. Some come to find excuses for not serving God, while others are simply concerned with when the service will end. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having a genuine desire for the salvation of others, just as Paul expressed his longing for his people to be saved. He shares a personal experience of the power of God manifesting during a moment of praise and worship, resulting in many people getting saved. The preacher also highlights the role of personal testimonies in inspiring others to seek salvation and urges believers to share their experiences with those who have not yet encountered God's goodness.

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## Transcript

You'll find the reading in the book of Romans, chapter 10. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

For if they have been eager of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the rights of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Four verses out of the tenth chapter of the book of Romans.

Thank you for letting me come back again. I've looked forward to this time with great anticipation. For as I know of no church that I love like I love your church.

To me, the greatest church I know of. I'm grateful for the privilege and the honor and the opportunity of coming. You've gotten one of the most genuine preachers I've ever known as your pastor.

They just don't come any better anywhere in time. And you've been so fortunate that God has allowed him to stay with you these years that he's been here. Many churches twice as large as yours would be delighted if they thought they could get him even tonight.

How God's blessed you and honored you by allowing this great man of God, this loved and appreciated and sought after all over this nation. I'm just grateful that he's been spared to bless you and lead you. Because you deserve it.

And I thank God for every one of you. May the blessings of God be upon all of us as we meet together these days. Worship him.

May we pray. Our Father, tonight, we lay bare our hearts and our lives and ask you, dear God, to come in our midst and to do for us and through us what needs to be done tonight. Thank you for Beulah Baptist Church.

For the tremendous impact that she's had upon all of our lives, we're grateful. Thank you for her far-reaching ministry. Thank you for her sharing her preacher with other places that they might be touched as a result of the ministry of this church through this man of God that they sent out.

Father, we pray tonight to revive all of us and warm all of our hearts and save those who are lost. We pray that you'll bless everybody in this service tonight. May it be a time of encouragement and inspiration and that that'll make us to be what we ought to be for Jesus.

Father, we pray tonight that you'll take thy servant and loose his tongue and illuminate his mind and give us holy unction. And then we shall praise you for it. In the name of Jesus.

Amen. Now, in the scripture that I read to you a moment ago, Romans 10th chapter, brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Those are the words of Paul.

My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. My heart's desire, my heart yearning, longing, compassionate, aching heart that my people might be saved. They have a zeal of God going about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves unto the rights of God which is in Christ Jesus.

And Paul was conscious that like he before he'd met with Jesus, was a very religious man but didn't know Christ. And so he's saying, the longing of my heart, the desire of my heart, the earnestness of my heart, the compassion of my heart is that Israel might be saved. What is the desire of your heart in coming together these few days together? What will be the desire of our heart? Are we coming because we desire that our loved ones might be saved? That our loved ones might be rescued from their careless, wayward life? Paul was so concerned he said, I'd be willing to be cursed if it'd save them.

Well, that saved a lot. But when your heart gets to aching and longing and yearning, and you've seen people like that, seen mothers, seen wives, seen parents, get so burdened that they couldn't eat or sleep for their loved ones. Weep over them.

Their heart's breaking. Their heart's longing, yearning that they might be saved. And it didn't long until that one is saved.

And that ought to be the desire of all of our hearts in this meeting. Not just to come and to be seen and answer the roll call. That's all some Baptists do.

They go to church to answer the roll call. If I don't go, there'll be an aftermath. So I've come, preacher, here I am.

I've answered the roll call. They get that answer, that's all they care. They didn't come to get anything.

Just come to be here. Some others, Baptists, go to see. Let's go see who's there.

When you get there and you see who's there, that's all you come for and that's all you got. Then some others come, my friends, to find an excuse not to come back anymore. We've got a lot of Baptists who go to church just to find some alibi for excusing themselves from serving God.

And they go back home, they find some excuse. And the devil will have one when he gets there. Because, my friends, every time you come to worship, the devil's here.

That's what sons of God present themselves before the Lord to worship. And the devil came also among them. God said, what are you doing here? He said, I'm going to and fro, seeking whom he may devour, up and down the land.

Every time you come to church, the devil comes to try to get you to not come back no more. If you'll be honest, the devil's done his best to get somebody to never come back to church again. And so, my friends, some folks just come to find some alibi for not serving God.

And they get it, and that's all they came for. Then we've got some other Baptists just coming to see when we're going to get out. Not interested in getting in, when we're going to get out, what time we're going to get out.

We've got to get out of this crowd we've ever had in generations past. So somebody wants us to get out. How long are we going to have to stay there? If that's all we desire, that's all we'll get.

So, my friends, tonight, Paul said, my heart's desiring, my heart's yearning, my heart's bleeding, my heart's aching, that my people might be saved. And if that's what we come for this week, my brother, sister, not to answer the roll call, not to see or to be seen, not to find some excuse so we won't have to come back, not to find something that will let us out instead of getting into it. My friends, we need to come and have a desire that the lost, loved ones, and neighbors might be saved.

That ought to be what we come for. What shall we come for? That's what Paul, his whole life, his whole heart, his heartbeat, his heart concern, everything about him, sought it. That his people might be saved.

And then David, King David, had a desire. We want to look at it. In the 51st Psalm, Psalms 51, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to my lovingkindness.

According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

The desire of David was, Wash me, Lord. Wash me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Purge me.

I acknowledge my transgressions. I acknowledge my sins. I confess my sins.

My transgressions is before me. I confess them. That ought to be what you and I come to this meeting for, is to confess our sins.

He said, He that hideth his sins, and covereth his sins, shall not prosper. But if we confess our sins, then he cleanses us from our sins, and uses us. And so, my friends, we, the desire of our heart ought to be that God will clean us up, so we'll be usable in His service.

And unless we get clean, delete our lives, cleaned up from sin, He can't use us. We're not usable. We don't want to be used.

We can't be used. So the desire, like David, he said, Wash me, Lord. I acknowledge my sin.

I confess my sin. And as a result, I want You to forgive me, and cleanse me, and purge me, and I'll be whiter than snow. That ought to be our desire.

You say, Well, now, preacher, I ain't got no sin to confess. Is that so? You've got one right then. If you say that, you've got one to confess then, because you've done a total lie.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth's not in us. And you come along and say you don't have any sin, you've done become a liar. That's what you've become.

And we need to confess it and get rid of it. Now, we stop to recognize maybe you haven't murdered anybody. The average person, when you think of sin, they think of it in five categories.

Murder, adultery, lying, stealing, drunkenness. Well, I want you to know tonight there's 726 different sins cataloged in the Bible. Pull those five that most folks think of as bad sin out.

You've still got 721 sins to face God with. And there's not enough need to go around and say that we've not sinned. We have.

So what we ought to desire when we come to the meeting house before God, Oh God, wash me, cleanse me, purge me from my sin, make me whiter than snow. That's the thing David wanted. He wanted to come into the presence of God.

And his sins is between him and God. God's hand is not shortened that He cannot see, and God's ear is not deaf that He cannot hear. But your sins are separated between you and your God, and here is where you face His face.

So, my friends, David didn't want God to be hid from him. We oughtn't to want God to be hid from him. We ought to come with a desire, Lord, I want to confess my sins, my faults, my failures, my weaknesses, and I want You to cleanse me, oh God.

Make me whiter than snow. Wash me that I may be used of You. That ought to be the desire of every one of us as we come to this meeting.

That's what the meetings are for. It is cleaned up and purged up and fit for service. David said, create in me a clean heart, oh God.

Create in me a clean heart, oh God. And my friends, we need to come to this meeting to ask God to create in us a clean heart. You say, well now, Mr. Ray, I don't need my heart cleaned.

Is that so? Do you remember when you first got saved? You felt like if you didn't tell somebody about it and share it with somebody, you'd just burst open then. You know, some loved one, some buddy, some

pal, some friend, and every time the church door opened, you was there, you couldn't hardly wait to pray first, testify, you couldn't wait to testify hardly. You wanted to be first.

You told everybody you'd come in contact with what a marvelous experience you'd had with Jesus Christ in your heart and in your soul. Where is that at now? What's happened? There's something in there that ain't right. Create in me a clean heart, oh God.

We need to ask God to clean our hearts out. The devil's put so much stuff in our hearts in this modern age. We've seen so much on the television media and the news media, heard so much, brainwashed so much, it's got to place nothing wrong anymore.

Everybody do his own thing. I want you to know tonight, we need to ask God to clean our hearts out. Create in me a clean heart, oh God.

Not somebody else, not the preacher, not the deacon, not the singer, but create in me a clean heart, oh God. Clean my heart out, not somebody else's. We come and say, now Lord, clean old John's heart, old Hazel's heart, old Sue's heart.

Clean them out, oh God. Well, what about your hearts? You're not bubbling with the Spirit of God like you once was? Then there's something done got in your heart. The devil has done chunked your well full of some things.

You keep this in mind, my friends. Create in me a clean heart. Clean everything in there.

The devil's come along with a lot of nitpicking, fault-finding, persecution, gossiping has gone on, and that's all got in your well. And all folks are just going around nitpicking each other. All them old nits is in the heart.

Folks going around picking up the gossip, that old stinking, slimy, filth gossip down in their heart. You say, well, preacher, I don't want that gossip. But every time any starts to come to me with it, I guess so they found out to use the community garbage can.

Now, if you don't want gossip, then put your lid on your can and they won't be around to hand it to you. So what we need is get our hearts cleaned up. Then a lot of us have got hurt feelings.

A lot of us have got hurt feelings. What do they say? When you go to pray, if you've got anything in your heart against anybody, forgive them in order that your Father may forgive you. I don't care what it is, and I don't care how it got in there.

When you go to pray, if you've got anything in your heart against anybody, you've got to get it out before you can get forgiveness of your sins. We just will face it. But preacher, you don't know what they did or they said or how they treated you.

God knows, and He said, when you go to pray, if you've got anything in your heart against anybody, forgive them in order that God may forgive you. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive. And that means you don't have forgiveness of sin as long as you've got something in your heart against somebody.

So my friends, David has said, get everything out of my heart. Clear me a clean heart, oh God. Oh, my heart cleaned out the devil and put a lot of stuff in there.

And I'll tell you, the devil's put a lot of stuff in a lot of our hearts. We're not as jubilant for God. We're not in praise in God.

We're not enjoying our religion. We're enduring it. Because, my friends, the devil's chunked our hearts full of stuff.

To illustrate, I was up in Pansori, Kentucky, in a meeting, and we was trying to get a church started. They had a little one-teacher schoolhouse out there, about a third as big as this auditorium. And the lady taught all the time, but she did it every day.

But she'd bring a piece of ice every morning and put it in a big old five-gallon can, a cooler can. And then the kids could go there and push a spigot and get water to drink during the day. Had a big old three-foot dug well outside of the schoolhouse.

She'd draw water, pour in there on that ice, and then the children could get from the spigot water to drink during the day. One night while that meeting was going on, some devilish boys went out there and chunked that well full of cordwood and stumps and pans or cans, or anything they could find to put in it, they put it in there. The teacher came out the next morning, put her ice in her cooler can, went out and left the bucket down to draw some water, and she couldn't get no water.

She went to her car and got flat. She called the trustees of the school. They said, filthy, nasty.

It wasn't fit to drink. Trashy, filthy water. Washed out the bottom of it.

And she could go out there, put it in the cooler, and then the children could get water during the day as they got thirsty. Now, there wasn't anything wrong with the well. It's what the devilish boys had put in it.

The well hadn't gone dry. The well still had water in it. But those devilish kids filled it up with something to keep them from getting water.

Now, what I want to say to you tonight, my dear brother and sister, if you've been saved by the grace of God, there's nothing wrong with your well. It's what the devil's chunked in your well that's keeping you from having the Spirit of God on you. In other words, my friends, Jesus said, He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, it shall become a well of water bubbling up into everlasting life.

In other words, if you get saved, then God puts a well in you. He said, He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, it shall become a well of water bubbling up into everlasting life. He said, Out of thee shall flow rivers of living water.

So, my friends, when you get saved, the Lord puts a well in man, and it's supposed to flow like a river and furnish those who are thirsty with the Spirit of God as a testimony. In your witnessing, it flows out like a river and people drink of it and become refreshed and desire to have some of the water. You keep this in mind.

He said, It will bubble up into everlasting life. I want you to know one thing, my friends. When God saved your soul, the Holy Spirit took up His abode in your heart.

Now, just let's say something for example. My friends, up until the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came upon the prophets and the priests and anointed them and gave them power to do things for God, and then He'd go back to Heaven. Then when Jesus came among us, He performed the things for God.

But Jesus said, When I go away, I'll send the Holy Spirit and He shall abide with you. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus went away and He sent the Holy Ghost. And He said, Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and that it dwells in you? You keep this in mind, my friends.

This Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is living in you and in me. He's not up in Heaven. He's not out in space.

He's in your heart and in mine. Now, if you can take the Bible and show me where He exists and where it exists in your body, then you do it and I'll apologize publicly. Now, you just face it.

So, if the Holy Spirit gets into the service, He's got to come out of me in you. Jesus said, Out of these shall flow rivers and live in water. And when He said it, on this occasion, the children of Israel, it's time when they didn't have no water.

And they complained to Moses, Moses complained to God, and God told Moses, Then they set up a feast time, eight days of feasting. And for seven days, the priest would come out, eat once a year and pour out of a golden pitcher water. And the people would get it and drink it and praise the Lord who gave them water.

But the last day of the feast, the eighth day, the priest would come out and turn a golden pitcher up and they wouldn't know why it had come out. Jesus stepped upon the scene and said, Whoever one that thirsteth, come unto me and drink. And out of these shall flow rivers of living water.

It says in the next verse that He's referring to the Holy Spirit who is not yet given. What's He saying? He's saying, From now on, you don't look for a Moses to strike a rock to get water. You don't look for a priest or a preacher to pour it out of a pitcher.

From now on, when you need the Spirit, you come to me with it. And out of thee will flow rivers of living water. So my friends, I want you to know if a church is going to have a spiritual service, the Spirit's got to come out of you and out of me.

He ain't coming from up yonder or out yonder. He's coming from within us. And if we've got Him covered up and smothered in there and He don't get out, then there's no spiritual water for those who are thirsty.

So the devil sets out to fill up all of our wells and to keep us from flowing because he wants the world to starve and go to hell without the Spirit. And so we need, my brother, sister, and I to realize before God that if the Spirit of God flows in service, He's got to come out of you and out of me. And if He don't come out of us, there ain't going to be no coming.

Now, we've got a lot of folks running around, my friends, trying to produce something else, but it don't work. They'll tell you to go out here and do certain things and you'll get the Holy Ghost. If you get the Holy Ghost, you'll have gifts.

And you will talk tongues and you'll do this and you'll do that. I want you to know one thing. You can go out here looking for the Holy Spirit to come from some other source and you can go out here hunting the Holy Ghost and you'll get your ghost, but it won't be the Holy Spirit because, my friends, He comes from within.

And I want you to know another thing. He tells us, God created us before the foundation of the world. God created us on two good works.

God put the gifts, according to the Book of Romans, the gifts and the calling of God without repentance. When God created you, He had a gift in you and a calling in you. You may never repent and do it, but, my friends, it's in there.

And when you do repent and get right with God, He calls it out of you. And you develop that gift and develop that calling. But keep one thing in mind.

It's not coming from somewhere else. So we've got a lot of folks, my friends, running around tying in the religious pot that comes along. Jesus movement.

Children of God movement. And all other kinds of movements going on. Deeper life movement.

And all of these things. Tongue movement. And all of that stuff going on.

I want you to know, my friends, the Spirit of God ain't coming from those movements. It's not coming from PTL clubs and the 700 clubs and what have you. I want you to know one thing.

If the Spirit of God ever moves out of you, He'll come from within. Know ye not that the wells in you and out of these shall flow the rivers of living water? Not out of some religious movement. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it.

And I want you to know if you're going to follow Jesus, you're going to have to love the church and give yourself for it. Folks that don't love the church and don't support the church with their prayers and their possessions and their presence, they've gone to the devil. I don't care who they are.

My friends, I want you to know tonight that Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it. And He said, He that's not with Me is against Me. And if you don't love the church and give yourself for it, you've done God against the Son of God.

That's all you've done. Now then, as we face it, out of these shall flow rivers of living water. Well, I mean, David said, Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Clean my heart out, God. My well's chugged up with stuff. A lot of us baptists have got a well's chug full of stuff.

Murmuring. Complaining. Fault finding.

Criticizing. Nitpicking. Wrong feelings in our heart.

My friends, God can't use us like that. We need to do like David. Say, My desire is, O God, create in me a clean heart.

Remember over the 26th chapter of the book of Genesis, Abraham dug some wells while he was here. And then Isaac came along after Abraham's gone. And God has blessed him so that Philistines got into this and tell you something.

And they were afraid to do anything to him because he's the offspring of Abraham. But they said, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go out and fill up the wells because the family can't live without water and the herds can't live and the herdsmen can't.

Well, the Philistines got together and filled up the wells with dirt. And they thought, well, now he'll have to move. He ain't got no water.

But Isaac had more sense than that. He just got his men together and went out and dugged out the wells. The water's still in the well when they got the dirt out where the water's where it used to be.

And my friends, the devil's chunked a lot of stuff, worldliness and all kinds of persecution and ridicule and different things has chunked your well, fool. It's all junk and you just can't get the spread out. What you need is the same thing David said, create in me a clean heart, O God.

Get my heart cleaned out. What else is in your heart keeping you from being happy with God? Listen, beloved, God's a happy God. You get full of God, you're going to get happy.

I don't care who you are. And I want you to know tonight, my friends, if you're not happy in the Lord, then the devil's done chunked your well full of stuff. And like David of old, create in me a clean heart.

Get everything in me that's keeping me from enjoying being a Christian. A lot of you don't enjoy being a Christian. It's monotony.

It's boresome. Oh, it's Sunday again. I've got to go to church.

Poor me. Oh, they're having another one of them revivals and I'll have to go. Poor me.

You're so down in the dumps because you have to be religious. My friends, when you're full of God, it's running like a river. And what we need is to get our wells cleaned out, our hearts cleaned out.

And I'll tell you, my friends, it's not gifts and Holy Ghosts and this, that and the other. Baptists need days. Bless God, what they need is their wells cleaned out.

And when that happens, then we'll go places for God again. Now then notice, David said, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew the right spirit in me. First of all, I want You to wash me and cleanse me.

Then I want You to create a clean heart. Not another heart, but just clean out the one I've got. Then put the right spirit back in me.

He didn't have the right spirit in him. Have you got the right spirit in you? Have you been complaining and nitpicking each other? Criticizing each other? Don't feel right towards each other? You just haven't felt right towards certain people. You haven't got the right spirit.

There's not love there. There's jealousy and envy and strife and hurt feelings. My friends, I'll tell you how Baptist churches got the wrong crowd in our nurseries.

It's not the little fellow kicking his sock off belly and back there that hurts Baptist churches. It's a bunch of adults. All the time a colic comes up.

Every time something don't go to suit, Oh, I got hurt. I can't go back no more. I don't like what the preachers say.

Oh, I can't go back no more. And the average Baptist preacher spends his life a-burping a bunch of belly-aching church members. When he ought to be winning the lost of Christ, he can't run around a-belly-aching those and burping, burping, and burping those belly-achers.

That's what's hurting us. My friends, what kind of a spirit's in you? Have you got a murmuring spirit? Have you got a fault-finding, nit-picking spirit? Gossiping spirit? Fault-finding? Criticizing? Finding some alibi to quit? If that's the spirit in you, you're wrong tonight. And you need to ask God to... David said, Renew the right spirit in me.

I have the wrong spirits in me. Have you had some wrong spirits lately? Wrong attitudes? Wrong feelings? Wrong... Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and then put the right spirit back within me. I want the right spirit in me.

Have you got the right spirit for God to have a revival? Have you got the right spirit to get your loved ones saved? Get them on the road with God? What about it? My friends. Then he said something else. Create in me a clean heart, oh God, renew the right spirit in me, cast me not away from Thy presence.

Cast me not away from Thy presence. Oh Lord, don't take Your presence away from me. You know one of the worst things this side of hell is for God's presence to leave you alone.

I can't think of anything worse than hell than for God's presence to leave you. Take not Thy presence from me. Let's look over and find the passage of Scripture.

It's in the sixteenth chapter, I believe, of the book of Psalms. Eleventh verse. Thy will show me the path of life in the presence.

In Thy presence is fullness of joy. At Thy right hand there are pleasures evermore. But in Thy presence, God, is fullness of joy and pleasures evermore.

Now when you get out of the presence, there's not any joy in it. We have a man by the name of Jonah. God said, Jonah, go over there and preach to none of them.

Get her saved. Tell them if they don't repent within forty days, I'm going to destroy them. Jonah was a Baptist preacher who didn't want to go.

He didn't believe in being radical, hard-boiled in preaching his people's sins. And the pressure of God's call grew worse. And the old boy thought, I think I'd better take a vacation.

I'm about to have a nervous breakdown over this thing. His nerves all shot, and he went down to Joppa where the commercial haulers of freight were. And he got down there, and he paid the fare to go to Tarsus.

And the man took his fare so he could ride to Tarsus with him. And as a result, he got down in the bottom of the boat and went to sleep. And God sent a storm.

And the storm began to blow, and the thunder and lightning, and the waves began to roll, and that boat began about to sink, and the unloaded part of the cargo dumped it in the sea, and it grew worse. They cashed lots, and it fell on Jonah. They went down to the bottom of the ship and woke up and said, Hey! What's going on? Jonah said, I've left the presence of God.

And he thanked the man. He paid the fare from Joppa to Tarsus to get away from God. So God wouldn't bother no more about going to Nineveh.

There he was. And he said, Fellas, you'll have to throw me overboard for this storm stuff. They said, Well, we don't want to drown the preacher.

He said, I don't want to get drowned either. But you'll have to do it. The storm grew worse.

They unloaded more freight. It grew worse. They got old Jonah up there on the board.

They pushed him in and said, Jonah, we hate to push you in. He said, Yeah, and I hate to get pushed in too. But then another puff of wind, another splash of water, and they pushed him in.

And God had prepared a fish. Notice the Word of God said He prepared a fish. He is special being.

A fish that could hold Jonah in his stomach and not digest him in three days and nights. And when he hit the water, that old fish went along Three days soaking in that fish's stomach. He's a hard-shelled Baptist and didn't want to be missionary.

Took three days soaking and finally soaked through. He had to go. But down there in the bottom of the sea, Jonah prayed, and that fish was glad to get rid of him.

He swam and he went. He hit the road towards Nenna before he got out of there against the sins of the people. He bashfully had to sit down on the God, and God said the second time, Jonah! And he went down there and preached till Nineveh had a revival.

And the whole bunch banged him. My friend, what did he do? He said he left the presence of God. And those old commercial men said, what in the world did you leave God's presence for? He said, so I wouldn't have to go over to Joppa, I mean over to preach to Nineveh.

Left the presence of God. Now when you leave God's presence, my friend, you're in a foul shape. There is full joy in the presence of God and pleasures evermore.

But when you lose your joy, you're in foul shape. Pardon me for a personal reference. I can talk about this here and not hurt nobody's feelings.

Years ago, my early ministry, God's anointed men had had power and favor with people and with God. And then God began to deal with me about some things I had to do and some things I couldn't do. And I got to arguing with God about it.

And I'd come at God like this. I'd say, now look here, God. Like He didn't know, I'd stand around talking, get down on my knees and talk to God.

I'd say, now look, God, You never accorded to this preacher or that preacher or this preacher why pick on me? Why require to me? God would come right back at me. And I'd say, well, now look, Lord. It isn't fair to withhold this thing from me and not let other preachers and let all the other preachers enjoy those things.

Why? Why me? And they kept on arguing with God until one day God said, If you know more about it than I do, you can have it. Just press this with me. I was going out to the First Baptist Church and got out there.

Big church. Nice building. Lots of people in it.

But I found everybody in the church, every member of the church had tuberculosis, TB. And the preacher's wife even had it. They'd gone out there to that high, dry climate hoping to get well.

And I thought, Oh, I'll catch the tuberculosis before I get out of here. Because all bodies got it and they're all breathing that germ and I'll be dead with TB by the time I leave here. And I was so miserable.

And on Wednesday night, my throat, bronchial trouble set up in my throat and I thought I'd done caught all the TBs. I couldn't even talk. I told the preacher, I said, I'm catching the first train out of this town.

He said, you can't, preacher. I said, you watch me and see. And I did.

Got halfway back to Mississippi and had to stop the train and get a doctor to keep me from dying. I got on back home. Presence of God was gone.

I was miserable. I'd prayed, I'd cried, I'd begged God. And then where I'd built some churches where I'd gone and helped meetings, got folks saved and built churches.

They said, first, if you ever have a night off, you'll call us middle of the afternoon and we'll have a crowd come and preach to us. I called down Buckhannon Church. And sure enough, I got there.

The house was full of people who couldn't all get in the house wanting to hear me preach. I got up. Power got off of me and tried to preach.

Some of them got up and went out and I heard one fellow say, he can't, preacher, let something happen to him. But I knew it. Went back the next night and there wasn't enough there to sing a song.

They didn't want to hear me. I went and called another church in Valley Grove. I had two people on Mississippi and told them I'd be there the next night and preach and get a crowd.

Got over there and the house was full but I didn't get half filled with the message until some of them got up and went out and I heard somebody say, he can't, preacher, let something happen to him. Well, I knew it. Then I came over here and the church out from Chimney Rock, North Carolina, I scheduled a meeting there and I was trying to have a meeting.

And I was preaching. Twenty-five, thirty people would be under conviction. By the time they got on there and shook hands with me, conviction would lead them.

And they'd just turn around and walk back to their seat and none of them would get saved. I liked to go crazy. I cried.

I prayed. I called everybody that I could think of in the nation that could pray a prayer to pray for me. And called them, wrote them, sent them telegrams.

And I grew worse. I felt just like an old bear, a big old wooden bear, empty, rotten, falling off on the inside, no presence of God, no power of God with me. Oh, what a miserable... If hell is anything like it, I don't want to go.

I got in an awful shape. And it grew worse for forty-five days. I didn't have the presence of God.

I didn't have it. And I was in an awful shape. I was conducting a meeting then in First Baptist Church in Inman.

A lot of you know about it. And I was getting dirty every minute. And I prayed to all the grass patches, God, and help me.

That night when they started the song service, Spirit of God spoke to me and said, Alright, you get up here and shout for this whole crowd, and the power will be back on you. I told God, All in, I'll do anything, anytime, anywhere, anyplace, if you just won't withhold your presence from me. And I said, Oh Lord, look Lord, Dr. Lehman did not expect me to cut up like that.

He's a highly educated man. And Lord, these folks never saw a man or woman either shout. They don't even know how to shed a good tear.

It will scare them to death. And on top of that, I looked around and some of the main denominational leaders were there. They had a district meeting.

Some of them out of the Home Board and Foreign Mission Board and State Board. And they had come in to hear it. They had come in to hear the preacher that night.

I said, It will ruin my reputation all over the convention. Lord, don't you see, don't you understand I can't afford to shout in this crowd? Down the road, there's road folks down there about a mile from the church. If you'll let me, Lord, it won't make me do it again.

I'll go down there and hug them. He said, I didn't even ask you to shout. I don't care nothing about the trees.

They wouldn't know what you're doing, no how. And I said, Oh God, don't you understand? God said, Yes, I understood the other time when I took myself away from you. Withdrew my presence.

Don't argue with me, son. You took me on your face. You'd do anything, anytime, anywhere.

I said, Yes, sir. He said, Then get up and do what I told you to do. I turned around to Bill Parham.

I said, Bill, lead a maze in grace. He got up to lead a maze in grace. The power of God fell back on me.

And some timekeeper said, I'll shout her now in 39 minutes. I don't know how long I'll shout her. I don't care.

But I'll tell you what did happen. 116 people got saved while I was shouting. The power of God has been back on me since.

And if God had told me, Tonight, go up down into the White House and go out and shout. I'm not going to argue. I don't want the presence of God to leave me.

Oh, friend, listen, the presence of God left old Saul when God took the anointing off of him. And he got in an awful shape and suicided. So did Samson.

You listen, my friends could have been in the presence of God with a joy in the fullness. Oh, David said, take not your presence from me. Take not thy presence from me.

Have you lost the presence of God recently? Arguing with God? Withholding from God? Alibying with God? Saying, well, God, why me? Why should I suffer? Why should I go through this? Why me? Hey, you better accept that. Praise the Lord, He's asking you for something. Don't try to aliby and excuse yourself.

My friends, we've got a lot of Baptists tonight. The presence of God has left them. They're miserable.

They're in miserable shape. There's pleasure evermore in the presence of God. There's great joy in the presence of God, but there's misery out of God's presence.

We need to have the desire that David had. Create in me a clean heart. Put the right spirit back in me.

And take not thy presence from me. But listen, his other desire was this, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. My friends, if God withholds the power of the Holy Spirit from you, the devil will tear you up and wreck you.

You won't have nothing to comfort you. You won't have nothing to guide you. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, Oh God, I want the Holy Spirit to have full sway in my life.

I want to give Him room in here. I don't want to fill up the well and smother Him out and crowd Him out. I want the Holy Spirit to have full sway in my heart.

You better want it. My friends, what is your desire? That you be full of the Holy Spirit, praising the Lord, bubbling over like an artesian well for God, flowing out like a river? What about it tonight? The desire of your heart ought to be, take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Let Him flood my soul.

Let Him make me witness. Let Him have me to tell of us and praise the Lord. And praise God.

Let Him move in me, Oh God. Don't! Don't! What have you done? Don't let God take the presence of the Holy Spirit away from you. You'll be miserable.

You'll be wretched. You'll be in foul shape. And then He said, Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold with me thy free spirit.

Then I'll teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted. Restore to me the joy, not salvation, the joy of salvation. Then I'll teach transgressors the ways of God, and sinners shall be converted.

Are you listening to this preacher tonight? Ninety-five percent of you who are saved, if you'll be honest, you know what got you interested in becoming a Christian? Hearing somebody else's testimony. You heard somebody talking about what a wonderful experience they had when Jesus saved them. You heard somebody talking about what a wonderful experience it was to get saved.

It got you interested. Ninety-five percent of you listening tonight, my friends got saved because you heard someone else talking about the goodness of God, and the blessings of salvation, the experience of being saved. And it got you hungry.

Got you thirsty. Got you wanting in. Now then, if we don't share it with them, those that's left behind us, what's going to make them want to get saved? David said, Restore to me the joy of salvation.

Uphold me with a free spirit. Let me get free again. And then transgressors will get saved.

So my friends, when we get free and start teaching, and explaining, and sharing with them salvation's experience, then they'll want it. He said, Out of thee shall you draw, with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation. Where? Out of the well of salvation.

Not out of space. Not out of heaven. Not off out in the woods somewhere.

Not in some religious crowd. PTLs and 700 expenses. But my friend, shall draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Where is the well? It's in you if you're saved. It's not somewhere else. It's in you if you're saved.

And you need to draw it out. And share it with people. With joy.

Praise in God. Glorifying God. Face it tonight.

My friends, He said if we draw out of the wells of salvation with joy, and praise the Lord, and share it with others, sinners shall get converted. And I've seen it happen. Down in Mississippi.

Chief of Police of the city I was in. A little girl about eight years old got saved. And she went home and witnessed her daddy that night.

And he blessed her out and shut her up. Next morning she got to the door. Lay down across the threshold of the door and said, Daddy, you've got to promise me you'll come to church today or step over my body when you leave.

He cursed his child and stepped over where she's laying. And the threshold of the door went on. But it wasn't funny.

The Spirit of God got to dealing with him. I mean, it got to working on him. And he said he could see his little girl under the car.

He was nearly having to pull her out dead. Went to the post office and opened his mailbox and said he felt like he was pulling a little girl out instead of his mail. That morning we got to church.

Little girl was there and she got up crying and said, Pray for my daddy. He's not right with God. Before I got up to preach, the pastor said, You see the young man sitting back there in the corner? He said, He has the worst criminal record in the state of Mississippi.

I don't understand him being in our service. If he gets saved, it will shake the whole town. Probably the whole state.

I said, well, pray for him. Maybe that's what God sent him here for. He said, now don't let him see you looking at him.

But look over in the other corner. He said, that girl over there with that red hair and fine jewelry and fine clothes on. He said, she's run the worst house of prosecution in this city.

She's done hard hurt on daughters. Out to the public. Said, not a wicked woman ever lived.

I don't understand why she's here. If she was to get saved, the whole city would know it. I said, well preacher, you pray while I preach.

I went to the pulpit watching those two persons. Praying as I preached. And I got myself all into it.

I'm preaching with all my soul, heart and mind. And praying at the same time. And double doors.

It was just one step up from the floor. I mean the ground. End of the church house.

Right in the midst of the message when I was at the heat of it. There's that city police car. Squad car.

Chief of police. Spun up in front. Put on the brakes.

Jumped out of the car. Run into that door and run down the aisle. Didn't even pull his cap off.

Gun on one side and a club on the other. Hip. Got nearly down.

I thought it was the meanest thing I'd ever done before he got to me. He got nearly down in front. He said, Mr. Ray.

I said, chief of the city, it's yours. Take over. And I sat down.

I don't know why he's there. I thought he'd come out of that car. He walked on down there and took his cap off and popped it on the bench in front of him.

Fell on his knees and I never heard such sin confessing. And he got right with God. He got up there and told about the experience of his little daughter getting saved the night before.

He said I hadn't been inside of a church in eight years. I never intended to go again. But I couldn't get away from it.

God's brought me. God's forgiven. I want the church to forgive me.

They forgave him. He said, God's forgiven me. And he started back down the aisle almost running.

I started to say, hey, you left your cap, chief. And I thought, well, he'll come back and get it. But instead of going to his car, he turned into that young man.

Fell down on his knees in front of him crying and said, son, you're the worst criminal in this city. But I'll let you get by because your mom and daddy had lots of money and they paid me to let you be a criminal. Not put you in jail.

I'm sorry I helped you to indulge in sin like that. Forgive me. God's forgiven me.

Before he left, that young man is saved. He went across and fell down on his knees. I can see him now in my own mind.

Before that young woman said, young lady, I robbed you of your virtue. If I hadn't had on the brass buttons of the city, I couldn't have got your virtue. You wouldn't have given up for it.

But because I was the chief, you yielded. And I earned you. I'm sorry I can never replace that.

But I want you to forgive me as far as you can. But I want you to be saved. Before he left her, she got saved.

When he got back to the front that morning, he had 19 of the roughest sinners in town down there with him that got saved. Why? He got the joy of his salvation back. And he taught transgressions the ways of God.

And sinners got saved. And my friends, we need to get the joy of our salvation back. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Wash me and I'll be white as snow. And then create in me a clean heart. Put the right spirit back in me.

And then take not the joy of salvation. Fill me up with thy Holy Spirit. And then I'll teach transgressors the ways of God.

And sinners shall get converted unto thee. That's David's desire. Paul's desire.

God said, My desire is that you sacrifice not. But the sacrifice of God is a contrite heart and a broken spirit. God don't desire you to make some big sacrifice.

He desires you to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And share Jesus with those around you. Then my friends, there's one other that had a heart's desire.

That was none other than Elisha. Wherever Elijah went, little old Elisha went with him, the young fellow. The old people said, What are you going to follow that old man for? He's going to fall dead.

He said, I know it, that's the reason I'm following him. Leave me alone. Elijah said, I've got to go over to Gilgal.

You stay here. I'll get back. He said, As the Lord lives and thy soul lives, I'm not going to do it.

I'm going to stay with you. Went on. And he said, I've got to go over to Jericho.

Stay here and I'll get back. He said, As the Lord lives and thy soul lives, I'm not going to do it. I'm going with you.

The old people said, You'd better quit following that old man. He ain't doing you no good. He said, Shut up.

Leave me alone. I'm staying with him. Got down to Jordan.

Said, I'm going over to Jordan. Elisha, you stay here. Said, As the Lord lives and thy soul lives, I'm going with you.

And Elijah walked up and there wasn't no bridge. There wasn't no boat to come up to the river. The water went back.

They walked across on dry ground, kicking up dust with glory to God. Got on the other side, walking along. Elijah said, Son, what do you keep hanging around after me for? What do you keep hanging around after me for? He said, I want a double portion of what you've got.

My desire is a double portion of what you've got. Elijah said, That's a big order. But, if you're present when I leave.

He said, Well, that's what I'm doing. I'm going to be present. Sure enough, he's going down the road.

And all of a sudden, the Spirit of God called Elijah. And Elijah caught the man. He said, I wonder if it's going to work.

He went back outside and folded it up. Walked up to Jordan. Lord, God Almighty! The water went back.

He walked across on dry ground. Some of the people said, Do you want us to go hunt him? The whirlwind caught him. Might have dropped him over in the valley on the mountain.

Said, No, don't go hunt him. He's gone. Said, This works.

He'll not be, you'll not find him. They insisted until he's the same. He let him go, the book said.

But, they hunted three days and didn't find Elijah. He's gone. But, did Elijah get what he asked for? Yes.

Where Elijah did eight miracles, Elijah did sixteen. Double portion. My brother, my sister.

The heart's desire of this country. God give me the mantle of some of these old men and women that slipped away from us. You've had some of the most godly men and women I've ever known in my life around here.

Year by year as I come, some of them slipped away. But, there's all in some of your hearts. You Timbans.

Or you Christians. Johnans. All of you.

Those dear men. And, dear Sarah. Not somebody else's.

Don't try to have a revival for Percy Ray or Curtis Barber or somebody else. Have one for yourself, folks. Let's pray for God's mantle to come on us.

And, have power. Wage a war against the devil in this country. And, save our homes.

And, save our churches. And, save our families.

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