

Eating Together With Him

by Phil Beach Jr.

The Lord desires a people in whom He can see a veil upon their face, indicating a heart that is fully committed to Him, and He longs to sup with them in a mutual communion, a mutual supping, a mutual fellowship.

Duration: 1:02:54

Scripture: Isaiah 5:1, John 15:5, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Abiding", "Intimacy With God", "Surrender and Pruning"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the profound desire of Jesus to have an intimate relationship with us, illustrated through the metaphor of 'eating together.' He highlights our need for God's grace to prune away self-sufficiency and distractions that hinder our communion with Him. The sermon calls for a heartfelt prayer of surrender, inviting God to take control of our lives unconditionally. Beach Jr. encourages believers to recognize that true life and fruitfulness come from being united with Christ, who is the source of all goodness and beauty in us. Ultimately, the message is about cultivating a garden of faith where Christ's character can flourish within us, allowing for a reciprocal relationship of love and communion.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. Lord, we just want to acknowledge your presence tonight. We want to acknowledge, Lord, that you are altogether lovely, altogether beautiful.

Oh, how you want to infatuate our lives with yourself. How you want our drives and our impulses and our passions, Lord, to be tempered and tamed and cleansed from things that don't lead us towards you. How we need to be tamed.

We need to be brought to your feet, Lord. We're such complex people, Lord, with a very complex world. Lord, in the midst of it, how we need a sovereign work of your grace and your Spirit in us daily.

Restraining us, checking us, convicting us, guiding us, directing us back. Back to the springs of living water. Back to the rock from whence cometh our help.

Oh, God, we acknowledge tonight our need for this, Lord. Lord, we want to acknowledge our tendency to become strong in ourself. We want to acknowledge our tendency to become self-sufficient.

We want to acknowledge our tendency to become independent and quite competent in ourself. Oh, dear God, have mercy upon us. I'm wondering tonight who would be willing to pray a simple prayer with me.

But I don't want you to pray this lightly. And I don't want you to pray this if you don't feel a sense of quickening in your spirit. But how many would like to pray a prayer along with me tonight, asking Father in Heaven to take matters into His own hands and to do whatever is necessary.

Now, beloved, we're not praying a prayer with a condition on it. We're not saying, Father, I want you to do whatever is necessary. However, this area of my life, Lord, is really off-limits to most people.

And nothing personal but you two. Now, Lord, you know that I love you. And you know, Lord, that we have a good relationship.

You know, you and I understand each other really well. But, Lord, please understand, this part of my life is off-limits. So, Lord, when I pray the prayer, now, Lord, take things into your own hands.

You know I mean that, but you know what I don't mean. Now, Lord, I want to pray that prayer, but I certainly don't want it to include this area of my life. Now, I don't mean to be humorous, but then again, I guess I do mean to be humorous.

Do you catch what the Lord very well may be saying to us at this time? Huh? So, therefore, when we ask everyone, are you willing to pray a prayer? Maybe that will shed some light on the thought of praying this prayer. Lord, take things into your own hands unconditionally. Now, Lord, we're not looking to ourselves for the courage or the strength to pray such a prayer.

Because, Lord, we don't have the courage in ourselves. But you never asked us to look in ourselves to find the wherewithal, to find the resources, to find what we need to live the Christian life. You invite us to look to the sufficiency that comes from you.

You provide all that we need to be all that you want us to be. So, immediately, the burden of the responsibility is off you if you will just see Jesus as everything. Now, Brother Phil, that's a good prayer, but you don't understand.

I don't think I can do that because, see, the I, the I, the I. Beloved, Jesus spoke seven profound words. And the meaning of these words, if it ever struck us, would totally change our life. Listen closely.

For without me you can do nothing. Seven words. The most profound words, I believe, that are found in the Scriptures.

So, therefore, Jesus never asks you to do anything without entirely expecting to find His grace, His enablement, and His energizing power, the sufficiency that enables you to do it. He never asks you to do anything. Lord, this is between you and us individually.

No hand raising. No standing up and coming forward. Lord, here's the prayer.

We all may join in our spirits by saying, Father, take things into your own hands. Lord, do whatever is necessary in your sovereign wisdom, knowing it will be governed by your sovereign love and mercy, but may be firmness and sternness. But that's all right, Lord.

We need that. Whatever it is, do what's ever necessary to bring our lives into a more complete union with you experientially at your feet. Lord, this may include some pruning.

This may include the Master will take His heavenly pruning hook and go into some areas of our life that appear to be fruitful that maybe for a season were useful to God, but now God is going to cut them away. And we're going to feel a sense of barrenness there. Lord, give us the grace not to hold on to these areas of our life, but to simply let your sovereign wisdom prune away those things that you know in your wisdom need to be removed in order to what? Produce more fruitfulness in us.

Give us the faith of children, Lord. The faith of children to be able to simply say, Yes, Daddy, whatever you want. God is going to take His pruning hook and He's going to apply it to areas of our life, beloved.

And this pruning hook will come, and let me tell you, beloved, listen closely. The pruning hook does not deal with those things that are not good in our life. Oftentimes we associate pruning with God cutting sin out of our life.

That's an altogether different thing. The pruning hook cuts away areas in our life that have potential fruit, fruit, things that God could use. The pruning hook is used to cut away branches sometimes that could, if they weren't cut, produce fruit.

But the eye of the vineyard owner knows that if he cuts this away and this away, it might bear fruit. But if he cuts it away, that which remains will be altogether more fruitful, altogether more lovely, altogether more for His pleasure, for His glory and His honor. So we ought not to think it strange if the Lord applies that wonderful pruning hook in our life.

Now, have you prayed that prayer in your heart? You don't have to answer that question. If you have prayed that prayer in your heart, beloved, I want you to know something. Number one, your heavenly Father has heard you.

And number two, your heavenly Father will speedily implement His answer to that prayer in your life. And it will be to His utter joy to see the end result of Him working that in your life. He will joy over you, the Bible says.

He will sing over you. Did you know that we sing to the Lord, but did you know the Lord sings to us? Did you know that we joy over God, but God wants to joy over us? You see, it's a mutual, it's a reciprocal thing. Tonight, by the help of God's grace, I want to share a message from the Lord's heart that I believe is going to address some very pertinent needs and issues in our life tonight.

I believe it's the consummation of our little fellowshiping together for the past three nights. And the name of this message that the Lord has put upon my heart is very simple. Eating together with Jesus Christ.

Eating together with Jesus Christ. I want you, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to Revelation 3. The Lord has it in His heart, beloved. Beloved, the Lord has it in His heart, beloved, to enjoy a very sweet and intimate and lovely and vital relationship and intimacy with us.

If we understood and knew how the Lord longs after us and why He longs after us, we would be so delighted. We would be so filled with joy. We would be so excited.

Could it be, listen beloved, could it be that we could begin to experience in our Christian life the very things that a young bride who is about to be married experiences? If we really understood the desire the Lord has for us? Could it be that we might find our hearts in such a state of excitement as would a lovely bride the night before her wedding finds herself amidst the nervousness and amidst the butterflies of course?

Oh, how she just longs for that night of consummation with her beloved husband who she has veiled her face for, which means that veil, it doesn't have any meaning today perhaps, but that veil indicated that she was hid from the sight of all men, that she was veiled, she was unavailable. She walked through the streets of the city with a veil upon her face and when someone saw that veil and indicated to them she was already somebody's lover. She wasn't for sale.

She wasn't available. Her eyes were fixed upon the one who she had committed herself to. It was a sense of nobody but Him.

My heart has no love but Him. The veil, that veil. Oh, how the Lord longs for a people in whom He can see a veil upon their face.

Do you walk the streets? Do you go about your business, dearly beloved? Do you go about your day though the world cannot see it, though men and women cannot see it? Do you go about the day and God can perceive by His all-sovereign eyes? Does He perceive a spiritual veil over you indicating that in your heart your eyes are upon one and you do not desire to flirt? No, I'm not necessarily referring to flirting in a physical way. I'm referring to the flirting with this world. Does the Lord find a veil over you? Does the Lord see a heart, an inner man, an inner life that is so after Him that it doesn't want anything else? This is His thought.

This is His desire. A holy bride without wrinkle. One who is not defiled by women.

One who is not defiled by the world. Unspotted, pure, pure religion before God the Father, James says, in the latter part of that verse, is to keep oneself unspotted from this world. To keep oneself unspotted from this world.

God has a passion tonight. He wants us to catch this passion. This passion exceeds anything in the Lord's heart at this time, at this late hour.

May God grant it to us. May God grant it to us. Ask yourself this question.

Be honest. Be honest. Ask God to give you honesty.

Lord, is my heart on fire for you? Is it you alone that I am after? Has your work become bigger to me than you? What a snare. Has your work become something I long for greater than just sitting at your feet? Lord, if you would choose two paths for me and say, which one would you want? One that would result in work for God and possibly being seen by men, or another path where you would never be recognized by men, you would never be acknowledged as anyone significant, but you would find a cuddly, snuggly spot by the Savior's feet, close to His heart, and you would commune with Him and He with you, which one would you choose? Which one would you find yourself to desire? Or is there a conflict within? Is there a conflict? Lord, can I have both? Can I have both, Lord? Is there a conflict? Does that reveal something of the motive, something of the deep workings of our heart? Are we after the Lord or are we after something else? Are we after the Lord or do we want something other than the Lord? Of course, we do it in His name. It's in His name.

We pray for His blessing, but the Lord wants to take that veneer off, go right to the heart of the matter. What are you really after? What do you really want? The Lord in totality or something else? Revelation 3, verse number 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and He with Me. Now, the word sup there is an old word, but what it actually means is to dine together. Actually, it wasn't just a casual snack.

This word literally means the main meal together. Oftentimes, it was the evening meal, at which time people would eat together. Jesus is actually saying here that He stands at the door and knocks.

Beloved, may I say to you tonight by the grace of God that Jesus Christ is standing at the door. Now, I know traditionally that people interpret this as meaning Jesus, therefore, is outside and He's knocking to come in. But I would like to simply, and I believe I have Scripture to support it, I would like to try and change that traditional interpretation to another interpretation, and that is the Lord is not outside, but He's within, knocking, seeking a greater communion with us.

The Lord in verse number 20 of chapter 3 is showing us something of His broken heart over the Laodiceans. And may I say that the brokenness within the Lord's heart over the Laodiceans here is a lack of supping one with another. It's a lack of communion one with another.

Notice the words of Jesus. I will come into Him and will sup with Him and He with me. A mutual communion there.

A mutual supping. A mutual fellowship. A enjoying a meal together.

This verse suggests one of the highest forms of fellowship and intimacy. One of the highest forms of communion. One of the highest expressions of giving part of ourselves to someone else and they in turn giving part of themselves to us.

It was the absence of a passion to commune with the Lord and therefore, the absence of the Lord's ability because of our lack of communing with Him, for Him to commune with them, that broke the Lord's heart in the Laodiceans. Remember, eating together with Jesus Christ. Eating together with Jesus Christ.

What is it that the Lord is after? Let me ask a few questions. Listen carefully, ok? Sunday night, by God's grace, we talked about the fact that we are crucified with Christ. Sunday night we discussed that it is insufficient to equate the Gospel with simply being a forgiven sinner.

That is part of the Gospel message, a vital part, but standing alone in itself is incomplete. We saw that the Bible very clearly taught that we not only at the cross of Jesus Christ become a forgiven sinner, but we become a crucified sinner. And that forgiveness is really what opens the way for us to receive by faith the fact that we are crucified.

We learn that to be a forgiven sinner means that, praise God, the Lord is not holding against me my sins anymore. To be a crucified sinner is, uh-oh, the Lord wants to get out of the way my old life. He wants to get out of the way all that I am after the flesh, so that in its place He can form the image and character and likeness of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be a crucified sinner is, I no longer live. We saw that big I, that big ego, that the Corinthians were full of, and that was the cause of all their problems in the church. They saw they were sinners forgiven, praise God.

Paul said they were partakers of grace. They evidenced salvation. They were enriched with all knowledge and utterance.

They were taught by the greatest apostle that ever lived and many others. And they definitely understood grace, but they failed to see that as forgiven sinners, the Holy Spirit wanted to make the objective cross a living reality in them unto the removing and the putting away of the old man and the establishing of the man in glory in their life. Then last night we looked at the fact that God is cleansing His temple.

God is purging His temple. We looked at judgment and how God is judging His church and that the basis of that judgment is Christ Himself. Christ is the standard.

When God sees the church, He sees Christ. And therefore, the only stuff that can fill the church is what Christ is. Christ is not only the foundation, but Christ is the building material so that the house of God, which is the church, ultimately must become an expression of what Christ is.

Therefore, anything and everything that is not according to Christ is under the judgment of God. It's part of the old creation. And Jesus brought the old creation to an end on the cross.

It is finished. It's over with. God doesn't reckon it anymore.

The only thing God reckons is His Son and the life of His Son. And that life has been deposited in the church and now it is the chief goal of the Holy Spirit to make good in the church the glorious life of the Son of God so that the church can become an expression of the fullness of the Son of God. What a glorious thought! What a glorious thought, is it not? Our lives can be full of the beauty of Jesus.

Let me ask you a series of questions that I seem to have gotten while praying that perhaps you've asked. Now, be honest. Again, we need honesty.

Be honest. Lord, why the death, death, death, death message over and over again? Number two, Lord, why so much about judgment and the need to die to self? Number three, Lord, why the message of I've got to deny myself? I'm a sinner that I need to turn from sin. I need to turn from myself.

Lord, why the times of darkness and sadness and seemingly no joy in my life and no rejoicing in my life? Lord, why these things? Lord, why do I feel that the message of the cross is wearisome and it's sometimes burdensome and I don't even feel like I want it, Lord? I want to find something else that makes me happy. Okay. Have you toyed with thinking those kind of questions? You don't have to answer them.

If you're honest with yourself, you'll most likely say, yes, I have thought of those questions. Tonight's message, I believe, by the help of God's grace is going to answer those very questions. Beloved, the message of the cross of Jesus Christ and our not only being forgiven, but crucified sinners and the continual need to recognize that the curse is on the flesh and the flesh is to be the unclean thing that the believer is not to touch.

Anything to do with the flesh, we are not to have anything to do with it. We are to disown it. We are to say regarding the flesh, I don't know the man.

Do you remember when Jesus denied the Lord? Remember? The pressure was on Him. He was at the fire. The women come and said, oh, you know Jesus? I don't know Him.

He says, I don't know the man. Now, Jesus said, Peter said, I don't know the man. Now, the Greek word there is the same word that Jesus used when He said that you must take up your cross and deny yourself and be followers of Me.

So what Jesus is saying, He's giving us an insight into what denying means. See, to deny yourself is not to fight with it and try and overcome it in your flesh. You'll never do it.

To deny self, to deny all the areas of the flesh life is not to declare war on it and say, tonight, flesh, you and I are going to wrestle. And by golly, I'm going to whip you because I'm tired of you. Forget it.

Flesh can't fight flesh. You can't whip the flesh. Rather, to deny the flesh is very simple.

We disown it. We don't know it. We are no longer in the flesh.

The Bible clearly says. As Christians, we are in Christ. We are in the Spirit.

Your true essential life, if you're a Christian, is no longer what you are in the flesh. Your true essential life now is Christ. Colossians 3. Christ who is our life.

Now to make this transition, this is why we need a renewed mind. To make this transition and to live in the good of it on a daily basis will revolutionize your Christian life. I no longer know the man after the flesh called Phil.

I don't want to know him. I only want to know the true me who is the life of Christ. That's my true life now.

God has given me a gift. It's a new life. He has literally uprooted me from the first Adam, from flesh, from sin, and has replanted me in Christ.

He has literally done that with you. Literally. It's not just a fine doctrine.

That's the problem with Christianity. It has been reduced to creeds and doctrines. No.

It is a living reality. You presently are now in Spirit. If you are a born again, Spirit indwelt child of God, you are presently right now seated with Christ in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

You are presently right now in Spirit joined to the eternal God who is your strength, who is your refuge, who is your all in all. You are presently right now, listen to me, as close to Almighty God as Jesus Himself is. You know, we think about Jesus and we say, boy, it must be pretty awesome being where Jesus is right now.

The Bible says He's in the Father's bosom. The Bible also says He's at the right hand of the throne of majesty. We say, man, I bet God really looks after Jesus.

Don't we? How many of you ever worry about Jesus getting hurt or getting somehow lost? You don't even think of it. Because you equate Jesus as being with God so close. He is God.

He's one with God. But He is a man now too in heaven. He's the glorified man.

Well, did you know the Bible says that the believer is in Christ and Christ is in God? Therefore, listen closely, though physically we are in this building, this town of Hackettstown, the state of New Jersey, the country of good old America. I don't know how good it is. We need to pray for it.

Physically, these are all true and we are not denying it at all. Although the nuclear bomb came, it would be quickly ended. But spiritually, where are we? Where are we spiritually? Where are we on the inside? On the inside, in spirit, we are united to the One who if we would go outside, we'd look up at the stars and we'd say, Glory to God! I'm united to Him.

I am not far from Him. I am one with Him in spirit. Where do you dwell? My dwelling place.

Well, I live in Mississippi. Well, that's true. But you know, God wants us to see that our dwelling place is Him.

All of this, all of this, the first night, crucified with Christ. The second night, judgment in the house of God. God is removing everything.

All of these things. Why, Lord? Why judgment and death? It's because none of these things in themselves are an end. They're not an end.

Listen. They are a means unto God's final end. And tonight, beloved, we are not going to go into some complicated discourse.

We are reducing God's final end for His people with the simplicity of that I may suck with Him and He with me. God's whole reason why He is scourging us and chastening us and putting us through the discipline of the cross and putting us through the scourging and the discipline of seeing our flesh and recognizing how there is no good thing that dwells in it and how He's frustrating our plans and how oftentimes He allows things to come into our life that cause grief and sorrow and He allows things that we don't understand. Why is He doing this? He's doing it because He is bringing us somewhere.

He's bringing us to a place where He longs us to be. That's what we're going to look at tonight. I'd like if you would turn your Bibles to Song of Solomon.

Song of Solomon. That's right after Ecclesiastes. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and then Song of Solomon.

Now, beloved, a little earlier we read the Scripture in Revelation chapter 3 and we saw that Jesus longs to sup with us and He wants us to sup with Him. Now, let me ask a question. What do you think He wants to eat with us? You think He wants us to go to McDonald's and He have a Big Mac and we have a cheeseburger? You think that's His thought? Now, come on, let's think this out.

Jesus wants to eat. He wants intimate fellowship with us. Some of you are saying, I'd rather go to Pizza Hut.

Or maybe some of you are saying, No, I'd rather go to the first walk on Main Street. Some Chinese food. Joe wants just a simple bowl of bean soup with some corn bread.

What are we going to eat with Jesus? Now, keep your fingers in Song of Solomon chapter 4. I want to read from Luke chapter 14. Luke 14 verse number 15. And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

So this person here recognized there was going to come a day when people would eat bread at the table of God in the kingdom of God. My question tonight is this. If Jesus' ultimate end, if His ultimate intention, which is realized through a thorough working of the cross in our life, if that end is supping with us and He with Him, what is He looking for in that meal? What is the reciprocal meal that we shall enjoy by Him and

He shall enjoy by us? Beloved, I cannot emphasize how important this is tonight.

I cannot emphasize it. This will place all the bitterness and all of the grief and all of the sorrow of the cross into a whole new perspective. You know how the waters were bitter and then when the branch from the tree was thrown into the waters, the waters what? Turned sweet.

Beloved, God now wants our bitter waters to turn sweet. But I tell you, they can't turn sweet unless we understand why the cross. The one side of the cross is a death, a dying, a coming to an end, an anathema to the flesh.

But the other side of the cross, brother and sister, it is a glorious side of life, life, life. It is literally sitting at the feet of Jesus and the water of life and the water from the throne of God coming into your very innermost being and springing forth as wells of living water. The end is that we bear forth fruit for the healing of the nations, the health of the nations.

Yes, this message of the cross produces something glorious, something wonderful, something altogether delicious. But we can't have that without the former. Okay? So what are we going to eat in the kingdom of God? What are we supposed to be eating now? Oh, beloved.

Did you know that this is not a futuristic message? Please follow me now. Please follow me. Did you know that right now the Lord is longing to come and feast on something in us? Did you know that? But did you know that there's only one thing that He can feast on? And there's only one thing that we can feast on when we come to Him.

And we're going to show you exactly what that is. And once we understand what that is, then we will have the interpretation to why God so severely demands that the cross be that which we cling to and the principle of the cross be wrought in all of our life. We will understand it then very well.

Song of Solomon, as I mentioned, Song of Solomon. Chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. Beloved, I want to say right from the beginning that I believe the book of Song of Solomon is a book that reveals the love relationship that Christ has with His church. And that is the essential meaning of it.

And that is how we need to go to it. It reveals something of the Lord's heart that is altogether lovely. Now look how it opens up.

Verse 1, Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair. Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks. Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing, whereof every one bear twins, and none is bearing among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet. Thy speech is calmly.

Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks. Do you know what's happening right now? Do you know what's happening right now? This Beloved, this is the man speaking. He is actually adoring and being infatuated by the beauty of His Beloved.

He is right now describing her with very graphic language and all of these have spiritual meaning. They all have a spiritual meaning. But what I want you to see is He sees something in her that literally gets His heart panting.

Verse 7, Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Ammonah, from the top of Shaniar and Hurnim, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the lepers.

Listen, thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse. Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse.

Verse number 12, A garden is enclosed in my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. And as we read on, we find more and more that the book of Solomon is about the guy expressing that she ravishes him. And then we find that she is expressing that he ravishes her and that she is altogether in love with him and she is altogether infatuated with his countenance and he is altogether infatuated with her countenance.

This is an incredible spiritual message here showing us what the Lord is after. What is the Lord after? Continuing in Song of Solomon, chapter 6, verse 2, My beloved is gone down into his garden to the beds of spices to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies. Now, do you know what the beloved's garden is? Where the garden is? Listen, beloved, you are the garden.

He comes and he seeks that he might taste of the fruit, that he might indulge in partaking of the fruit that is being born in his garden, which we are. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 9, You are God's garden. You are God's husbandry.

You are God's farm. He seeks that you might be the place where he finds lovely, beautiful fruit, that he can enjoy, that he can actually partake of. John, chapter 15, Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches.

In this garden, he himself is the life. He himself is the life of this garden and he so longs to eat the fruit. Listen, that he himself produces in us.

That he himself produces in us. Beloved, what is the Lord looking for? What is the supping that he wants to enjoy with us? He longs more than anything to see the beauties, the perfections, and the splendor of his own self formed and produced in us. And it is that and that alone that constitutes his passion for us.

When we see this, beloved, oh, it changes our Christian life. You know how some Christians say, oh, I can't come to God, I'm so filthy and I'm so rotten. Beloved, let me tell you something.

That is altogether true. But as a Christian, you're not coming to God on the basis of what you are. You're coming to God on the basis of what Christ is in you.

The beauty that God sees in you has nothing to do with what you are in your flesh. It was never any beauty that God saw in you. It was the beauty that God foresaw Christ would be in you.

See, everything will be in you. Christ is everything. And that when God works the cross in your life, he is working it so that you can see more clearly your true self is Christ, your true life is Christ, and that God doesn't expect you to produce and manufacture and conjure up anything that it takes to live the Christian life.

He doesn't expect you to produce any of it out of yourself. He gives it to you wholly in Christ. The sum total of the perfections in the Christian are Christ himself.

Christ is the sum total of all the loveliness in our life, all the beauty in our life, all the splendor in our life, all the goodness in our life, all the righteousness in our life, all the holiness in our life. It's Christ. And did you know that according to the Song of Solomon, the more Christ sees himself being formed in us, the more his love grows for us.

Not that his love is imperfect. It's perfect to begin with, but it's a love that gets more and more excitable. But beloved, get your eyes off yourself.

He doesn't find anything good in you, and he's not looking for it anymore. He's brought you to an end. Remember when Jesus said, it is finished? Do you know what he was saying? It's finished.

The totality of the first Adam and his sin and his self is laid upon me, and now Christ became a curse. Why? Because he bore our sins and our self. He took upon himself what we are in our flesh.

Not only did he take it upon himself, but he buried it with him. He buried it to be no more remembered, and now in his resurrection, there's the new man, and that's our life. The life of the glorified Son of God is the life of the church.

God does not reckon you anymore according to what you were. God reckons you and sees you now according to what you are in Christ. Oh, how liberating.

You know, it makes me want to do this. It makes me... It is so wonderful. Your life is Christ.

God is working discipline and scourging and judgment and spanking and not letting you have what you want and letting you sometimes fall and be defeated all because he wants you to come more and more and more to the realization that your life is now Christ and that what you are in the flesh is now buried. You are not bound to it anymore. You have been severed from it, and the beauties and perfections of Christ are the only things that God now wants to establish in your life.

Nothing of yourself, nothing of your own making, nothing of your own birth, all by him, for him, through him, of him, and unto him. Wow, what a message. Christianity, the church, is not an organization.

The church is not a building. The church is not, oh, something earthly. It's something heavenly.

The church is Christ corporately being expressed in redeemed believers who are members of himself. That's what the church is. Do you know where joy comes from and peace comes from and singing comes from? It comes from seeing him and knowing that he is our life.

That's what brings us through when God works the cross in us. It brings us through because we see what God's end is. More fullness in his Son.

Do you remember the fig tree? Mark chapter 12. I want to say something now. I want you to listen.

We're going to be closing any moment. Don't despair. I want to say something right now.

I want you to listen very carefully. In light of everything that we have just mentioned, I want to make a statement. Jesus is hungry.

Do you believe that? Some of you might say he is not. He has no lack. He's the immortal God.

I'm telling you Jesus is hungry. He's hungry right now. And do you know where he's looking for food? In his garden.

Go through the book of Song of Solomon. Find you an NIV or even a simpler version. It's difficult to understand, but find it.

Go through it. You will find something. This guy is constantly going in his garden and feasting on the fruit and the spices in it.

He's hungry. Jesus is hungry right now. Now watch this.

Let me tell you something. Whenever we read stories in the Bible, they're literal, they happen, and they have natural applications, but that's not the limitation of it. Jesus said, The words that I speak unto you, they are life.

The flesh profits nothing. When Jesus did things, they had a lot greater significance than just the momentary apparent interpretation. Watch what the Bible says in Mark.

We're going to close with this. Mark chapter 11, verse number 12. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry.

Jesus was hungry. And you know what he was doing because he was hungry? Obviously. What do you do when you're hungry? You look for food.

All right. Watch what Jesus did. And seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came.

If happily he might find anything thereon. And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever.

And his disciples heard it. Now, in the Old Testament, what did the fig tree represent? Israel. Now, listen closely, beloved.

The Old Testament was a shadow and a picture of what God was after, which Christ fulfilled. Jesus was hungry and he went to a fig tree to see if he could find fruit. He couldn't find any, so he cursed it.

Jesus was constantly looking for fruit in Israel. Now, what kind of fruit was he looking for? The fruit that they had from their gardens? No. He wanted spiritual fruit.

See, they were his garden. Isaiah chapter 5. Isaiah said, God planted him a garden. It was Israel.

He looked for good fruit. It brought forth bad fruit. See, God... Now, this is gonna, again, you have to think about this.

God has an eternal passion. God has an eternal hunger. He longed for communion with a group of people that he had with his son.

See, he's had communion with his son from eternity. But from eternity, he wanted a family of sons, just like his only begotten son. He was hungry.

He looked to the fig tree. He looked to Israel and he saw no fruit. He cursed it.

And now he became... Oh, beloved, listen. He is now the vine in the garden. We're the garden and he's the vine.

And it's the vine that produces the fruit. The fruit in our life is coming out of the vine. He is the very vine.

That is, he's the source of the fruit that he himself wants to eat. He's the source of it. So what is he looking for? He's looking for fruit.

He's looking for food. He's looking for more of the characteristics and features of himself in us that he can say, Oh, that's lovely. And then we, in return, go back to him.

Oh, thou art lovely. And then there is a... there's a reciprocal communion in spirit. His loveliness adores us and our loveliness adores him because it's his own loveliness, which, by the way, is the only loveliness that's lovely.

The only loveliness that's lovely. So he's infatuated with our loveliness and we're infatuated with his loveliness. And what happens? A supping begins.

An eating begins. A communion begins where he just partakes of what we are in him and we partake of what he is. And beauty and love and all kinds of marvelous things come out of that.

Do you see it? Do you see what the Lord's after? Anything less than this saddens the heart of God and falls short of God's thought for his people. Eating together with Jesus, he seeks fruit. An ever-increasing expression of his life and character in us.

That is the sum total of the beauty that he sees in us. So don't ever say, Oh, I don't know what the Lord can see in me. Don't ever know what the Lord can see in me.

He can see nothing in you if you think he's going to find anything in the flesh. He'll see nothing. But if you see that your life is Christ, you'll say, Hallelujah! My righteousness is lovely in thine eyes, O Lord, because it is thine, not mine.

My beauty, O God, makes thee sing because it is not mine own beauty, but I reflect thy beauty. It all goes back to him. Why does God give the cross to us? Why does God work it in us? So that what he is can become beautiful in us.

There it is. God and his new creation man filled with his beauty, filled with his love, filled with him. Do you believe Jesus is hungry tonight? Do you know where he's looking for food? What's he going to find when he comes to your garden? Is he enjoying a feast? You will thank God unceasingly for the cross of Jesus Christ and the full ramifications of it, not only the forgiven sinner status, but the crucified.

All together set aside what I am in the flesh. You will thank God unceasingly when you see by the Spirit of God, the revelation, that you are the garden of God. He has planted in you a vine.

That vine is lovely. It brings forth fruit that pleases him. It's his son.

That vine is planted in you and you're part of that vine. You're not separate from it. You're part of it.

The very branches are part of the vine. It's one vine. There's God's new creation and that is what makes God so infatuated with us.

It's the presence of his perfect son bearing his perfect fruit in us. May God give us tonight a passion that surpasses anything else to be vessels in whom the garden of God is bearing the fruit of the vine so that the Savior can come and enjoy a feast. And may we have a passion that God will continue to remove and take out of the way anything in the garden that's not coming from the vine because those things he can't commune with.

Now God is committed to do all this by his grace and by his love. Let's bow our hearts. Jesus is hungry.

My God! And we don't have to manufacture and offer to him something of ourselves. Father, thank you for this great salvation. I simply ask, Lord, that you'll take thy Word and cause it to prosper.

Open up the eyes of our heart. Help us to see. Enable us to receive and see this.

And may it transform us and change us and make us to be the garden wherein thy heart is delighted to find the fruit of thine only Son in abundance where we may sup with thee and you with us and together rejoice and be exceedingly glad. We pray, Lord, you'll do these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God. Amen.

And amen. Let's just together sing that song. Open my eyes, Lord.

I want to see Jesus. The answer tonight is let us see him. And as we see him, all these things will become clearer.

All right? Let's sing it together. Open.

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