

Joel - the Work of the Holy Spirit in You

by Richard A. Bennett

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit's presence and guidance in our lives, and the need to be in tune with Him.

Duration: 57:21

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Chronicles 30:21, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 58:1, Joel 2:15, Matthew 24:12, James 5:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of confessing sins individually rather than in bundles. He highlights the role of leaders in the church, such as priests, ministers, Bible school students, evangelists, and youth leaders, in leading the congregation in repentance. The speaker shares a personal experience of a powerful prayer meeting where the glory of God was felt, leading to people finding salvation. The sermon also emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of Christianity beyond superficial expressions of faith, and the importance of being prepared for the spiritual battle that awaits believers.

Transcript

It's a wonderful blessing to be here. And it's a wonderful blessing to sit down at the tables with some of you students, and to learn where you're coming from, and where you believe the Lord is going to take you. Some of you know, and some of you don't know.

But you really don't know where we're coming from. And so many have asked where we're coming from, and how we got here. And I just want to spend a moment or two in telling you a little bit about our past ministry, so you'll understand where we're coming from.

Dorothy and I are rather like the two ducks you see on the pond. If you see one, it's not very far that you have to look before you see the other. And our ministry has been knitted together in the Lord over the years.

I prayed before I got married, a prayer that I'd read C.P. Studd pray. I didn't pray the first part very enthusiastically, because he said, Lord, I don't want to get married, and I skipped that bit. But then I got to the next bit, and it said, but if I do get married, please give me a red hot poker, who will be behind me prodding me on when I want to let up.

And I want to introduce my red hot poker. Dorothy, she didn't know I was going to say this tonight, so I'm going to ask her to say a word she didn't know she was going to be asked. One thing I have learned in the ministry that I have one qualification I require, and that is to be an RFA, ready for anything.

And this is a time I am employing this RFA. It's a joy to be here for one reason. We want to be here to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we speak a little differently from you. As somebody once said to us, we are the minority group of the redcoats that never got back. And we really are delighted to be here.

But accents apart, we have one desire, is that we magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. And I don't know about you, but I have a heart that can cover up an awful lot of things. And I want my heart exposed to the Lord and his word.

We're very conscious that very soon now, some of you very precious people are going out. You're going out from here. Now, typical of girls, I don't know how boys think, but typical of girls, they kind of weep and feel so sad about it.

The day hasn't come and they're already all mushy and oh dear. And my husband said, well, the way to stay around is just fail. I said, yes, but Pastor Chuck will kick you out if you hang back.

You know, there is something about seeing our friends go out. We have no idea what battle they're going into. And we're old enough and perhaps experienced enough having ministered in many Bible schools around the world to sadly say that many who go out do not always finish the course.

We're asking that the Holy Spirit will so work in our midst to glorify the Lord Jesus, that especially for those who are going out from this school at the end of this semester in just a short while now, that you will go out understanding that the one person who alone is adequate is the risen Lord Jesus Christ in you. And you will finish the course for his glory. And that's what we're praying, that we will be determined that it shall be Christ only.

So behind the way we speak and the way we act and the way we look, please listen to the voice of the Spirit even now and let him meet you in his word as you respond to him. And the Lord bless you. Thank you.

That was a dangerous thing, me letting my wife speak. I wondered if I was going to get in on the session before it was time for the benediction. But she will be speaking to some of you ladies sometime during this time we're with you.

We haven't worked it out yet, but now and again I'll be appearing in the chapel service and now and again, Dorothy, we'll have a special session probably with the ladies. You say, what are you? Well, let me just say this. I am, I didn't say how old are you? I said, what are you? You want to know I'm nine, eight days older than Pastor Chuck.

But you know, young people haven't just been invented. There were young people around when I was 20. I remember being a young person and I just appreciate being with young people because before long we're going to be handing over the banner if the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't come.

And my concern is that we shall hand over those who have understood something of the deepest significance of the cross. Christianity is not only a toe tapping hand waving, knee slapping approach that turns people on. But it's something much deeper than that.

It's a movement of the Spirit of God that turns people around. And what we need to see in our hearts is as totally turned around for our Lord Jesus Christ that we shall live always for his glory. I suppose you could describe us as pastors to the wider church.

We were commissioned to this from a church in England when we were married 40 years ago. Subsequently, we were commissioned from a church in New York City to this ministry. And it's taken us to different parts of the world, particularly to the underprivileged, those who are having hard times and those who are suffering persecution.

For 20 years, it's our privilege to teach the word of God over high powered missionary radio stations, Trans World Radio in Monte Carlo, a million and a quarter watts. And for 20 years, we were able to beam. It covered all over all the continent of Europe.

And some of the messages were translated into Russian. This was when the Iron Curtain was still up and the wall was still not broken down. And subsequently, we were able to go on missionary trips to some of these communist countries.

That extended down into Swaziland. We broadcast from there, just teaching the word of God, just the two of us. We had no paid workers.

We had just volunteers who would type and some then translate the messages. And then it went to Far Eastern Broadcasting Corporation and it went into India and it went into Korea and it went to other parts of the world. And it gave us a link with the body of Christ, not the body of Christ that we know here, but the body of Christ that Peter speaks of in his epistle when he talks about the strangers scattered abroad from Cappadocia and Bithynia and Asia and Pontus and how these people were part of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know the church as a body. We're familiar with that. When one member suffers, we all suffer.

We know the teaching of the scriptures where the church is likened unto a building fitly framed together by the Spirit of God. We know the church as a bride, the bride that one day before long is going to be called into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I'm going to be much nicer to know when I get up there than what I am down here.

And I can't wait for that moment when I wake to be like the Lord Jesus Christ without the limitations of my lethargy and without the failures and the stumblings that I've known all too often in life. What a wonderful day that would be. But the church is also a brotherhood.

It's a church that's scattered abroad. And sometimes when we go, we think we go with all the answers and all the help that's necessary to the people in far-flung places. But I want to tell you that many of them can teach us a thing or two as far as their suffering and their devotion and their discipleship through terrible trials and tragedies.

In the course of this, after 25 years, and I'll get round to the sermon in a minute or two, but after 25 years, Dorothy and I decided that we wanted to express our gratitude to God for 25 years of marriage. We didn't

want to sit at home and receive a silver plaque. So we decided that we would write a little book, Your Quest for God, and send it to 25,000 people around the world and trust the Lord somehow or another to pay for this.

It was a real venture of faith to do it personally, but we decided we would do it and we printed the first 25,000 copies and we sent them to many of the people who'd been listening in the radio broadcasts in different countries and on different continents. Before long, a request came in that the book should be translated and we said we would love to translate that book. And so today, there are 36 languages of the little book, Your Quest for God, and over two million copies have been given away in countries where people don't have the privilege of hearing the gospel preached like yourself.

And it's marvelous how the Lord leads. I could tell you story after story, but let me tell you the most recent one. We sent it to, it was translated into, it translated, first of all, it was translated into German.

Then it was translated from German into Bulgarian. And then somebody from Bulgaria sent it to somebody in Macedonia, which is where all the trouble is at the moment. And we find that some of the greatest harvests today are in the places where there is tremendous trouble, tremendous persecution, and tremendous hardship.

And we had a letter from Australia asking if it could be translated into Macedonian. And then somebody from Australia rang us up and his name was Paul Dimitrov. And Paul told us how he came to Christ and how God rescued him as a brand from the burning in order to make him a vehicle of blessing to his own people in Macedonia, where so much tragedy and chaos is presently happening.

He and his family had immigrated from Australia, from Macedonia several years ago, but the family was in great distress. And when they got to Australia, Paul Dimitrov saw how his father was treating his mother, inflicting tremendous pain, emotional and physical pain upon his dear mother. And Paul's heart became so angry with his father that he decided there was only one answer to relieve his mother of her sufferings, and that was for him to kill his father.

So one day he loaded his gun. And with everything ready, he had it in his hand and walked through a park in Australia, a park that Dorothy and I walked through only about 12 months ago. And he was on the way to the location where his father was, and he was determined to kill his father.

And as he passed by a little open-air meeting in the park, a man came to him and said, won't you stop and listen to what he's saying? And Paul said, what is he talking about? And the man said, he's talking about a man called Paul who was on his way to kill people. I don't need to tell you the end of the story. He got gloriously converted.

He's the vehicle that God is using now to take some of our old broadcasts being translated into Macedonian, going to the people of Macedonia right at this very moment, and to translate the book, Your Quest for God and Food for Faith into these languages to help people who've never had the privilege of reading or understanding these things. And I could tell you so many stories like this. All I know is that I being in the way, the Lord led me.

And what a thrilling thing it is to know that when you're in the way, maybe you don't know where the way is going to finish up. You go down this road, you think that that's where you're going, but you get halfway down this road and you find that's not where God wanted you to go at all. But if you hadn't gone that way,

you would have never come to this corner.

And that's really where God wanted you to go all the time. And it's a wonderful, thrilling thing to walk with the Lord in the light of his word and to know the glory of God shining upon our way. But this evening, my heart is heavy.

And there's been burning on my heart for several days now, a message that I believe God wants me to share with you that was confirmed when I heard that you have been learning something about the Holy Spirit and something of his ministry and something of his person and something of the purpose that he has in your lives and the various gifts that he will give you to perform the work of the ministry. You see, basically and very simplistically, you look at the Old Testament and you see primarily it was God the Father who was directly dealing with his people, Israel. Sometimes they feared him when he spoke.

Sometimes they revered him when he spoke. And sometimes they tried to placate him with sacrifice and sought to enter into his presence as God had commanded through the shedding of precious blood. But primarily the Old Testament was a period when God the Father spoke directly with his people.

But you come to the New Testament, the Gospels, and you find there's a short period of time, just 33 years, when God spoke to people not through his fatherhood, but through his sonship. And the Lord Jesus said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." And he said, "The words that I speak, "I speak not of myself, I speak the words "that my Father hath given me to speak." And there was a sense in which for 33 years, it was God the Son who proclaimed the truth of God and taught it meticulously, principle upon principle, doctrine upon doctrine, in a methodical way to his disciples while he was here. But there came a moment in his life when he said, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." And he went forward to Calvary.

He ascended to heaven. And there he sits on the right hand of God the Father. But he said that, "There cometh one who will come along "and he shall be God the Holy Spirit." And from the day of Pentecost, we find that primarily moving on the affairs of men around the world is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, convicting the world of sin, converting men and women, drawing people into the body of Christ, drawing Bix into the building, and doing a work that only he, the Holy Spirit, can do.

But I'm convinced of this, that it could be in your lifetime, it could even be in my lifetime, when God the Holy Spirit lifts his eyes to God the Son and God the Father. And he in turn will say, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." And he, withdrawn with the Church from this Christ-rejecting world, will be the last opportunity that men and women will have to be born again into the body of Christ. And because of that, it's so important that we should be in tune with the Holy Spirit in what he is doing in the hour in which we live.

We don't initiate our programs. We don't evaluate our talents. We don't determine our preferences.

We don't think what we'd like to do. But we say, oh Lord, I want to get into the river of your spirits flowing, and I want to be carried along in the place where you are honouring the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of John 15, we read that the Lord Jesus said that he was speaking of himself, and he said also that the Holy Spirit would bear witness of himself.

But then he goes on and he says, "Ye also shall bear witness of me." And when we're talking about the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, we're merging with the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we're exalting the

person of our risen Lord. Now there's a book in the Old Testament, you've studied it, and I'm not going to take it in the way you've studied it, I don't think, this evening. It's the book of Joel.

And the book of Joel, as you have already learned, no doubt, is the very name signifies the meaning of the message. Joel, Jehovah, Elohim, the Lord, he is God. And in the book of Joel, we see something of the sovereignty of God moving in the hearts of nations.

There are three ways of looking at the book. Generally speaking, people will look at it from one or two perspectives, but I want to look at it as a third perspective this evening. The first way is we look at the historic event, that's how it begins.

He says at the very beginning, Hear ye this, old men. You old men, you've seen something when you were young that the young people of your day didn't see, and you need to tell it them. And you need not only to tell it them, but to tell them to tell their children and their children and their children to another generation, and let it never be forgotten what happens when a nation, the nation Israel, turns away from the living God.

And the historic event was simply that God had sent a plague of locusts across the land. And it's interesting when we read in verse four that the plague of locusts had four manifestations. There was the palmer worm, and that simply means an insect that gnaws at vegetation.

And then it was a locust, that simply means that the plague began to multiply as they went through the land, gnawing at the vegetation. And then the canker worm, and that means in the Hebrew, so I'm told, that those who have gnawed and those who have multiplied have little left to sustain their life, so they are lickens. They lick every ounce of succulents in the land.

And the final word is the word devourer. And we see there is a progressive devastation that sweeps across the land, and that was the historic background upon which the whole message of the Prophet Joel was paced. He says, I want you to look back and remember what has happened.

But he says, I want you also to look forward for I'm going to tell you prophetically what will happen. And what has happened to destroy the land and to cause devastation and desolation in the land is nothing compared with what will happen, as we know now, when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from moving upon the affairs of men. Sometimes Dorothy and I sit on an airport, and we look at the crowd shuffling hither and John, and we look into the faces of bewildered people, and we wonder what they are headed for in this Christ-rejecting world.

For the background is a picture of the future day of the Lord. Now I'm not going to talk very much about either of these portions this evening, but what I do want to talk about is that which laminates both that which is past and that which is future together. It's rather like a piece of three-ply wood.

There's the top piece of wood, and there's the bottom piece of wood, and there's the center piece of wood, and they're all laminated together. And throughout the prophecy of Joel, there is a spiritual challenge. And the spiritual challenge is particularly relevant because what is happening, even in the day when Joel wrote this, what was happening was that there was spiritual declension.

You read in verse nine, the meal offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. The drink offering and the meal offering were offered as a sacrifice unto God in spiritual functions back in the Old Testament priesthood. And the drink offering, which spoke of the, really it was the wine offering that

was poured when the sacrifice was offered.

The meal offering was that which spoke of future days when the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ should come. That which spoke of the presence of God was withdrawn from the assembly of God's people. Hosea says in his day that God says, I will withdraw and go to my place till my people which are called by my name shall seek my face.

And so often we do not realize with all our activity in the church that the real glowing glorious presence of the almighty God has been withdrawn and we're left to the bankruptcy of our own talents and our own abilities in order to try to keep the boat going. And God says that there was this spiritual declension. But he also said there was physical devastation.

The vine is dried up and the fig tree languisheth and the pomegranate and the palm tree also and the apple tree, all these have been withered up and he says there was emotional despair and therefore joy is withered away from the sons of men. I want to suggest to you that there is a sense in which in many of the churches in Europe, in many churches in America, the immediate presence of God has dissipated. And so often we go to church the way we do and we behave in church the way we do and we leave church the way we do is because we don't know why we're there and we don't know who we've gone to meet once we get there.

We really don't come to a gathering like this to meet one another. We don't even come to a gathering like this to hear a speaker. We come to meet the living God.

We come to meet the glorified Christ. We come to meet him of whom John saw on the Isle of Patmos when he said, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. You see, revival doesn't begin with the top blowing off.

It begins with the bottom falling out. It doesn't begin when we work things up to a crescendo of emotional excitement. It begins when we're let down so low we can go no lower.

And if we're one inch taller than the feet of Jesus, we're too tall to receive the blessing that he longs to bestow. So Joel says, it's about time you sanctify a fast and call a solemn assembly. That's a different phrase from what we have in our modern culture.

We talk about festivals of praise and we talk about the joy of the Lord, but before ever the joy was restored to the assembly of God's people, there had to be a solemn assembly. In the course of our ministry, on one occasion, we called what we called a solemn assembly in Switzerland. People came from persecuted churches, about a hundred, we were there for 10 days.

I asked a pastor to come with me from America and another pastor from Switzerland and three of us were there for this ministry. And in the mornings we would gather for prayer, the three of us before breakfast. We'd have a time of prayer and we'd ask who had a message laid upon their heart for the first session.

And we had the morning session and then we had the afternoon session and then we had the evening session. And I want to tell you that gradually the glory of God became so powerful as we were on our knees most of the day. The people in the village began to hear of this little prayer meeting and they would come in in the Swiss area.

And right in the midst of those prayer meetings, some would find the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior. The pastor came home to his wife and she said, what did you think of Switzerland when you got there? I've always wanted to go there. Was it a beautiful country? He said, when I was there, I saw one square yard.

And it was the square yard on which we knelt to seek the face of God day after day. What a wonderful thing it was to have that kind of solemn assembly. He says, blow the trumpet in Zion.

What does he mean, blow the trumpet? Well, you've already learned that if you want to understand the Bible, you have to read the Bible and gradually the Bible explains the Bible. And if you come to something you don't understand, you read on until you get to something you do understand. And gradually what you do understand will help you to understand what you didn't understand.

And so when you read about a trumpet, you think, well, I've read about a trumpet before and I read of it in Numbers chapter 10. And in Numbers chapter 10, we do read about two trumpets that had to be blown. And Joel is using the background of his biblical heritage.

And he's saying, blow the trumpet in Zion. And what was the trumpet to be blown for? It to be blown for two purposes, both of them very valid and very necessary. In chapter 10 and verse two, make two trumpets of silver and use them in verse two for the calling of the assembly and for the journeying of the camps.

And we read what the calling of the assembly was in verse nine. If you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets. It was the shout of the warrior.

And when the trumpet was blown, it was because the army was being called together for warfare. But then we also read in verse 10, also in the day of your gladness and in your solemn days and in the beginning of your month, you shall blow with the trumpets and your burnt offerings. It was to be blown, the silver trumpet was to be blown as the song of the worshipper.

And when the trumpet was blown, it was either to call the people to gather together to worship the Lord, or it was to call the people together to go into warfare. And you and I are not going to see the nation's history changed just as we sing our praises to the Lord in the confines of an evangelical constituency. That's very necessary.

The Lord inhabited the praises of his people. But together with that, there has to be the shout of the warrior. Why did the children of Israel cross the river Jordan in order that they may go into a land of plenty? No, it was in order that they may go into a land to defeat the enemy and to subdue it for the glory of God and to cleanse it of all its pagan practices.

And there was warfare. And the trumpet was blown when they went round Jericho. The trumpet was continually blown as they went from one battle to another, conquering in the name of the Lord their God.

The apostle Paul brings up the same theme in Corinthians talking about tongues. And he says, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle? When I preach these days, I really don't want to be clever. I do want to be clear.

When it's all over, I don't want people to wonder what the pastor has said. I pray that somehow or another, somebody somewhere in the congregation will be able to say, well, this is what God said to me tonight. Because I've blown the trumpet with a clear sound.

And there are those who are preparing themselves for the battle because the trumpet is being blown. And it's a wicked world out there. And there are demonic forces on every hand waiting to thwart and to sidetrack and to subdue.

And it's time that we blew the trumpet in Zion. Not only that we gather together as we have done so gloriously tonight to worship the Lord, but that we realize this is not the end. But there's a battle out there that's waiting for soldiers, soldiers of the cross, soldiers who are clothed with the army of God.

Well, we're getting to the thrust of what we want to speak about. We go on in Joel and we see what happens before ever the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit takes place. For in this solemn assembly, we read that this is in now in chapter two and verse 12.

Joel says, therefore, because of this, because of the situation in which you find yourself today, not just in the future days, the battle of Armageddon, which is spoken of later on, not just in that which is past, which the old men can remember, but the young men have no knowledge about. But because of what is happening today, therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart. What he's talking about is real repentance amongst the community of God.

Not repentance outside. It's interesting in the New Testament that when we read of repentance, it's very seldom repentance is spoken of to the unconverted crowd. Peter used it on the day of Pentecost.

Paul used it when he was preaching in Athens. But when the Lord Jesus Christ looked at the seven churches time and time and time and time again, he said, repent. He was speaking to the church.

He was talking about the church turning unto the Lord with all their heart. I wonder whether you and I are wholehearted in our turning to the Lord, whether somehow or another there are certain areas of our life that we don't want to expose to the light of his holiness and the incoming of his glory and the conquering of his sovereign power. Turn unto the Lord with all your heart.

Turn unto me with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. And then it says, turn unto me and tear your hearts and not your garments with a broken heart. We've been singing about the tears being wiped away.

There are some tears that are very valid. And whereas God wipes away the tears and he will wipe away all tears when we get to heaven, there is briny water that flows down the cheek of a broken hearted Christian that is a very valid experience in their walk with God. Over John 1, chapter one, in my old Bible, over Psalm 51 in my old Bible, there are water stains, not from one time when I knelt before God, but from many times when I've knelt before God.

And with a broken heart, with the understanding of everything that I am in myself and everything that I'm capable of without his grace, I've had to lay my life bare before the light of his presence. And it's been a broken hearted experience. But he says that this is not only a whole heart, not only a broken heart that precedes Pentecost, but it's also a tender heart.

For it says the Lord is slow to anger, he is gracious, he is full of mercy. And it's a wonderful thing for me to know that when I come in openness and in light before him, and when I name the very things that have grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit in my life, and when I name them honestly and transparently in his holy presence, that he is a gracious God and that he is abundant in mercy and he welcomes me back into his presence. But he doesn't allow my fellowship with him and he doesn't allow the immediate

consciousness of his presence in the daily routine of life to continue provided I haven't confessed my sin.

And I didn't commit my sin in bundles, I committed my sins one by one. And I found that it's a very humbling thing not to confess my sins in bundles, but to confess them one by one and to name them as God names them. Well you say, who is involved in this? Well it says here, let the priests and the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.

It's the leaders in the church. It's the Bible school students in the church. It's the evangelists in the church.

It's the youth leaders in the church. It's those who are in the place of responsibility and privilege in the church. Let the priests and the ministers of the Lord weep between the porches and let them cry unto the Lord and say, spare thy people and give not thine heritage to reproach.

I think one of the mightiest sermons I ever heard in all my life lasted for about four minutes. Dorothy and I years and years ago went the Sunday before Christmas with my mother and father who were living at that time to their church. It was an evangelical church of England.

There were many things about the church that we weren't part of and couldn't agree with, but the man who preached was a wonderful expositor of the Word of God. He had a great English study in a big, big mansion and the books were too deep all the way round. And he was learned and scholarly and meticulous in his exposition of the Word of God.

And we look forward to hearing the message that he had to preach. And he got up and he said, the text that I've chosen this week is when iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And as he read that verse, his voice cracked.

And those of us who were near the front saw a tear roll down from his eyes, down his nose and splash on his Bible. And he cleared his voice and he said, excuse me. He said, I'm sorry.

And he tried to get into his sermon. And as he tried to get into his sermon, he leaned over the pulpit and he said, please excuse me. He said, I've had a hard time preparing this message this week.

He said, you see, I've been in the ministry for 20 years. He said, I've been remembering the early fervor and the glow that I had as a young man. And now he began to sob convulsively.

And he said, in the course of 20 years, how professional I've become. And he just leaned over the pulpit and sobbed. A dignified state church with professional men and women in the congregation.

And nobody said a word. And then gradually in the silence, as people were still to know that God was God, he saw a handkerchief come out of a professional businessman and he began to wipe his eyes. And you saw a mother.

She began to cry. And for 10 or 15 minutes, as people saw that the love of many had waxed cold, and they'd become professional and pedantic and they knew what to do and when to do it and how to do it and what to say and how to say it. But their love for the Lord had waxed cold.

The Spirit of God moved over the entire congregation. And then he just simply said, would you forgive me if I didn't preach this morning? And somebody came and pronounced the benediction, but the congregation didn't go home. All over the church, people silently wept and sought the face of God as the

minister of the Lord wept between the porches.

That's of course why the founder of the Salvation Army, Booth, he sent a message, a telegram to a convention that was on evangelism. He couldn't go. Ill health prevented him from going.

And he sent the telegram to this great convention of 2,000 people who were gathered to discuss evangelism. And he just put on the telegram two things, try tears. And when you and I are beginning to be moved with the compassion of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we look out over the world that's dying, surely it's not sentimental, surely it's not effeminate for our eyes to become waters of tears as we look at the crowds without Christ.

Many years ago, I had a letter from a missionary. She was a missionary in Africa. And she wrote back and she said, last week I was in my mission compound alone.

And she said there was just a frail, fragile window and into my compound there came a demon-possessed, demented maniac foaming at the mouth. And she said as he came down my path, he literally took hold of trees and pulled them up with a superhuman strength. Such was his demonic power and force that he possessed.

And he came and he stood right outside my window. And she said at any moment, I thought he could just break through and tear me limb from limb. But she said as I gazed upon him, it seemed as though a teardrop splashed from heaven.

And I saw him through its magnifying effect. No longer a demon-possessed maniac, but a living soul for whom Christ died. And she said my heart that had been pounding for fear a second earlier was now filled with compassionate love for this poor, lost, perishing soul.

Try tears. Let the Spirit of God move you if you want to be anointed with power. You see, there are many of us who want to get to Pentecost before we've been to Calvary.

We want to get into the Promised Land before we've gone through the River Jordan. We want to get to Elim where there's water and palm trees. But we don't want the bitter waters that precede it.

And before ever you and I can know what it is to be anointed with the power of the Holy Ghost, it's only going to be as we're let down low with our own needs in the presence of the living, risen Christ. Now it's after that that God says in this spiritual challenge that goes through the historic event and the prophetic implication, he says I will restore unto you the years, the locusts have eaten. How good God is.

How good God is that he's made my mistakes and my blunders which have been repented of to be part of the growing process in my life to bring me to new dimensions of an understanding of his grace and glory that I could never have known had I not failed. And I've even, of recent days, thank God for those days of darkness, those days of sadness, those days of loneliness, those days of fear, those are the very things that have driven me to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to understand afresh that when I walk in the light as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth me from all sin. We have fellowship, the one with the other.

And tonight, the most marvelous thing is that I stand before you and underneath my skin is the living Lord Jesus Christ. He lives in me to do his own work. And I don't want to quench what the Holy Spirit wants to do through me.

And I want him to restore the years, the locusts of Eden. And I want them to become counterproductive to the plan of Satan who planned them for my defeat, for my despair, that I should be sidetracked away from the kingdom of God. But God has used them to bring me on into the understanding more and more day by day of the greatness of his glory and the greatness of his presence and what was restored.

Well, it's very interesting. In verse 14 of Joel chapter 12, right in the middle of this repentance, he says, I will restore the meal offering and the drink offering, the very things that had been withdrawn when there was a heart of repentance, they were the things that were restored, the sense of the presence of God. What a wonderful thing it is to live a life in fellowship with God.

Fellowship is not a means to an end. Fellowship is the end. And everything springs from fellowship.

The love of God is not a reward for my performance. The love of God embraces me right where I am. And then the love of God produces a change to take me to where I was not.

And the wonderful thing is that when I truly fall at his feet, and when I truly have a heart that's broken, and with all my heart I truly seek him, he says, I will restore unto you those things that speak of my presence in your life and in your fellowship. But he also says, the years the locusts had eaten, I will restore. And he says, the joy that was taken away, you'll rejoice and be glad and there will be a true restoration.

And it's only after that that there comes the promise of Pentecost. And I want to remind you that when Peter was being prepared for Pentecost, there was, first of all, a broken heart. He denied his Lord.

And when the loving, piercing, unflinching eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ pierced the gloom and gazed into the eyes of Peter, with that look of compassionate love, Peter went out into the darkness of night and he wept bitterly. And I believe in holy water. I believe the holy water is the briny tears that splash down the face of a broken-hearted man or woman who knows that they have brought pain and grief.

In their betrayal of the living, loving Lord Jesus Christ. But then Peter was tender in his preparation. The Lord Jesus said, do you love me? He said, yes, Lord, you know I love you.

Do you really love me? Yes, Lord, you know I really love you. Do you love me, Peter? Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you. It was the response of love.

Repentance always brings a response of love. You can't love if you pretend to be what you're not. You can only love when you are truly open to what you are.

I say this of my wife, the perfect friend is the one who knows the worst about me and loves me just the same. And the fact of the matter is there's only one who loves like that, and Jesus is his name. And when that love begins to manifest, there's the confession, yes, Lord Jesus, you know that I love you.

Didn't intend to say this, but it's on my mind. You've probably heard and read of the great Welsh revival in 1904, 1905. How the spirit of God moved through the Welsh valleys in such convicting power that valleys that had been full of thievery and drunkenness and child cruelty and blasphemy and hatred, the whole atmosphere was totally transformed in a period of some seven months.

Do you know where it began? It began in a little prayer meeting where there were 11 people. And a little girl had been converted for just seven weeks, and she'd never given a testimony before. And she stood up in this little prayer meeting and with a croaking, quavering voice, she just simply said, I love the Lord Jesus

with all of my heart.

And she sat down. And God so accompanied that testimony with the restoration of his presence and glory in that little prayer meeting that it continued all night. And there was a man by the name of Seth Joshua who knew that the Welsh valleys was right for revival.

And he prayed a prayer. And I met his son, and this is the prayer that he told me his father prayed. His father prayed after that little girl had given her testimony, Lord, send us a man who is one of us.

Not an Oxford or a Cambridge graduate, that when the power comes, we may know from whom it comes. And when the praise is given, we may know to whom the glory goes. Do you know who God sent? He sent a Welsh miner.

In seven months, 40,000 people in the Welsh valleys had been gloriously converted to Christ. In one year, 100,000 people had been swept into the kingdom of God by the power of the spirit of God. The revival rippled around the world because it's not by might nor by power, but it is by my spirit.

But God doesn't send his spirit to self-sufficient know-hows. God doesn't send the power of his spirit to people who've learned the right public speaking techniques. God sends the power of his spirit to broken-hearted failures, those who return to God with a broken heart, a tender heart, a whole heart.

And God says, and it shall come to pass that afterwards I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall dream dreams and your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. We know that this was partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost following the pattern that Joel spoke of. We know that it's going to be completely fulfilled in future days and probably what God is doing around the world at this moment to bring in many in places that haven't had the privilege of knowing that the gospel is the only power of God unto salvation, probably what he's doing today is the pouring out of his spirit.

Certainly here at Calvary and in all the ministries of Calvary, one can only stand back and be amazed and say truly this is of God. It's of God. I listen to the testimonies of you, some of you young people.

And I just know it's of God that brought you here. But the one final thing I have to say is the key that I want to leave with you. For we read that as far as this and people take it prophetically and interpret it one way and another and you hear it carefully analysed and you see it expounded in different ways as you read different commentaries.

But it says here in verse 20 through, be glad then ye children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord.

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