

# God Wants to Lead All His Children By His Own Voice

by Santosh Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine repentance, highlighting the need to loathe our sins and see them as hurting God deeply. It discusses the significance of hearing God's voice clearly, starting with sincere repentance and removing any weights that hinder our relationship with Him. The story of the man at the pool of Bethesda illustrates the value of waiting on Jesus and hearing His voice, leading to true healing and restoration.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1, 2 Corinthians 7:11, John 5:6, 1 Peter 3:20

**Topics:** "Genuine Repentance", "Hearing God's Voice"

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## Description

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## Transcript

It is so amazing as I sat there listening to the children recite from Psalm 16 over and over again, so many rich verses. I'm so glad that you all memorized that passage, primary, I think. I will make the godly my heroes.

That's the Living Bible paraphrase of verse 2, verse 3. I have set the Lord continually before me because he's at my right hand. I will not be shaken. I just, as you children said those verses, I was just praying for you that the time will come when the devil will try to throw things at you to shake you, but you will remember what you memorized these last few weeks.

I've set the Lord continually before me. He's here. I will not be shaken.

I can tell you now itself, you're going to be shaken. You're going to be tested to be shaken. The devil is going to try to shake you.

He's going to go to God and say, I want permission to shake this little boy, this little girl, and Jesus will say, okay, you can, but I'm going to make available to this little boy, this little girl, power to keep them, and Jesus will pray for you when you go through that time that your faith will not fail. He won't pray that you

won't be shaken, but he'll pray that you won't fail, and that's the meaning of this verse. You won't be shaken from setting the Lord continually before you, and you will know the path of life.

So wonderful children, thank you for blessing us. I was even, sometimes I think, you know, is it right that we clap for them every single one? I say absolutely. As long as I'm here, I will at least clap.

I think you all will too, because why? You know, it's not that we're puffing up anybody, and it's not that we're making some better than others. We don't even say that you have to memorize it. If you read it, it's fine, but you make an effort to speak God's word and proclaim it loudly.

That's good. I encourage, I'm glad that you all do that, but we clap because we want every single individual child to know that this is the important thing, much more important than whether you win the soccer game or come first in your class or anything else. To know God's word is the most important thing, and we will clap in this church for that above everything else.

Your parents will probably care about your grades too, but we don't care too much about your grades. No, you work hard in your school, please. Your grades are important because it'll help you live a life that's useful to God when you're not dependent on other people, and you can provide for yourself and the family that the Lord will give you.

But more important than that is to know God's word, and I'm so thankful that this church, the children here, you all are a shining example. Often we get people writing to us and say that they watch us online, and I think those of you online can testify to this, and they say that one of the favorite parts of the meeting is when the children get up and say their memory verses. Some of them write to us and say that when you all do it, their children get up in front of in the room and say their memory verse.

It's awesome. I love it, and I hope that we will start a trend. It's not a starting a trend, but I hope that we will perpetuate the trend, continue the trend of people who are interested in knowing God's word by our example.

That's very, very important. So thank you. We are in a new book.

I know Dave talked about it, but I thought I would just pull this up here, and for the benefit of those of you online, you would know this book. This is a book that has a very personal impact on me, and it's a very personal book for me. It's perhaps the shortest of the books that we're reading, but it's called The Purpose of Failure.

As Dave said, you can get it for free online, the audio book you can listen to, and if you need a hard copy, let us know. We have some in the back, but I'll read from the back. What do you do when you hit rock bottom? Do you see yourself as hopeless, as a hopeless failure? Have you failed repeatedly in your attempts to please God? Have you made a mess of your life? Are you tired of pretending that you are victorious when you are not? It is an amazing truth that God has a glorious purpose to fulfill even through the failures of his children.

It is an amazing truth that God has a glorious purpose to fulfill even through the failures of his children. Whatever blunders you have made in the past, you can make a new beginning with God today. Even if you have made a thousand new beginnings in the past and have failed, you can make the 1001st new beginning today.

God is not keeping count. I added that. It's not written here.

God can still fulfill his perfect plan for your life. If God does not do miracles for many of his children, it is not because they have failed him in the past, but because they don't trust him now. Oh, that you'll remember that.

If God doesn't do a miracle for you or anyone else, it's not because you failed him, but it's because you didn't trust him now. And if you have come to the end of yourself and are thinking about giving up, then this book will have an encouraging word for you. Read on.

And I can testify it has. The first chapter is the essence of a transcription mostly of a message that was preached there on April 9th, 2000 in Bangalore, India, 2023. And I remember that time.

It was a very critical, crucial time in my own life. And this message came as a timely message. I didn't hear it live.

I was here in the United States, but I read it later. It impacted me deeply. So I want to encourage all of you to please read this book.

Maybe you're not failing now. Maybe you feel like, okay, things are going well, but the time will come when the devil will try to find a moment of vulnerability to try to get you to be self-condemned or discouraged over some past failure. And then remember this, go back and read it even perhaps.

I remember when the picture that I got in the light of this was that things that I saw as stumbling blocks that caused me to stumble, specifically periods in my life, weeks or months or years, even that I'd wasted or backslid, they're like stumbling blocks. And I look back and saw them as things that I'd fallen over, tripped over and gotten hurt by. And there's a little bit of regret, but there they were.

If I look back on the path of my life, I could see them there. And then the Lord, when they said, go pick them up, let's build a house with it. Let's use those same stumbling blocks, those periods of life, which were full of sin.

They were dishonoring to God. Yes. But the grace of God is even greater than that.

And the grace of God says, pick up that same stone, pick up those years, that period of your life that you're embarrassed about, or that you wish you had never even done and completely wasted. Bring that to God and see if he won't use that to further his glory and to finish the work in your life. So I went from saying that God will finish his plan for my life despite my failures to saying that God will finish his plan in my life because of my failures.

And then I could say, thank you, Lord. I'm not proud of my failures. Sin is never honoring to God.

And it's why Jesus had to die. It's I see my names written in his wounds, but I see it in such a way that because of that failure, God could bring me to such an end of myself, such a place of hopelessness, where I'm never again going to try to do it in my own strength. Now, I'll be honest with you, it doesn't happen overnight.

And it doesn't happen just with one breaking. It happens through, at least in my case, and I think I see that in the life of Peter, for example. I see that in the life of Paul through repeated failures where I hit a bottom, as it were, and I say, thank you, Lord, you're going to use it.

And then something else comes and I realize that there's another bottom yet. Until we reach a complete end of self-confidence, God's going to have to continue to break us. Until we come to such a place where this, I realize it is absolutely impossible for me to be Christ-like.

It is absolutely impossible for me to be a godly husband. It is absolutely impossible for me to be pure. It is absolutely impossible for me to have control over my tongue, no matter how long I was able to hold on.

See, that's the thing, is we can hold on for so long, and then it just gets tiring after a while, and then you fall. When God can break you through that and allow you to fail even, and you come to the place where you realize, I can't do it, Lord. I want to be dependent on you.

I want to be crying out to you to hold me up 10 years down the road like I am now, and like I was when I first came to you. As helpless as I came to you when I was full of sin and you cleansed me for the first time, is as helpless as I want to remain on the day he calls me home. This is what it means to be a branch in the vine, that verse we have on the wall back there.

I think about it. I don't get to see it very often, so I'm usually sitting over there. I can't see it, or I'm singing, but think about it.

I think about that when I sit up here. I'm like a branch in the vine, and the day I'm no longer a branch in the vine is the day I will die, but as long as I'm remaining in the vine, and Jesus is the one sustaining me, if he cannot fall, I cannot fall. The secret to the branch remaining full of fruit is that the vine remains full of fruit, and if I'm in the vine as a branch, I will bear fruit as long as Jesus bears fruit, and he will bear fruit for all eternity.

He's the Alpha and Omega, so not despite my failures, but because of it, and like Paul, I can say, therefore I will rather glory in my weakness. I'm not ashamed. I am ashamed of it, but I'll glory in it, and I'll give that glory to God, and say, thank you, Lord, that you took my failures and turned it into something beautiful.

He brings beauty out of ashes. This is our God. I hope you're hopeful today, dear family.

I am, that there's no situation that that's too far gone. God has a plan for our life, so please read that book. I heard a story once about two sparrows sitting on a tree, high up, looking down at the earth, and watching the busyness of the city and the world down, and this man driving or walking down the street with a furrow on his brow.

It seemed like he was carrying a heavy burden, and just shaking his head, and sad, discouraged, and somebody else over there just frustrated about something, and the two sparrows were having a conversation. He says, I wonder why they look so anxious and so worried. They must not have as big a God as we do.

It's a parable. They must not have as big a God as we do. Jesus said in Matthew 10, I think, are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Two sparrows sold for a cent.

That means it's worth half a cent, and those sparrows have more faith than you and I. Do you not know that you are of much more value than two sparrows? If we are a much more valuable to God, God says you're valuable. Yes, the sparrow is valuable, but you're much more valuable than that sparrow. How much more shouldn't we have faith? If the one whose problem it is, it's not my problem to solve, it's his

problem to solve, because I'm his child.

If the one whose problem it is to solve says that I'm more valuable than two sparrows, and not even one of those sparrows can fall to this ground without their God noticing, shouldn't that cause us to walk around with a smile and say, Lord, I know I don't see the end. I don't know how this is all going to work out, but you're my father, and I will not be shaken because I'm going to set you continually before me. I will not be shaken.

There was an incident at our kid's school a few months ago that caused me to think about this. You hear often of situations where there are lockdowns and things like that, and I've imagined for most of us, we're a little bit separated from that. Many of our children are homeschooled, we have environments that are relatively safe, we think, but that's not the case for many people in the world.

They don't have the freedom to pick a safe environment for their children. Think about not just in this country, but other parts of the world. A lot of people think homeschool is the Christian way to do it, and you won't find that in the Bible.

I think there's a lot of benefit in it, but the Christian way is not necessarily the homeschool way. There are benefits to it, like I said, for one, simply because that's not an option available to many people. If it's not available, then that doesn't make it the godly way.

Even for us in the situations that we're in, and for our kids that were in that school, there was a situation where we were just told that there's some kind of lockdown or something like that. We found out after the fact that they maybe used a word that was stronger than they needed to. Of course, you're locked down immediately, parents tend to go into a panic, because what they don't want you to do is to show up there and make things worse, but the thing you want to do is to show up there and see, is my child okay? I think about all these situations that you hear about, even here in Colorado, schools down in Denver and Texas, different parts of the country and the world, where we're in situations that are beyond our control.

That's exactly the picture I got. Here was, we were at home, and there's nothing we could do. Every part of my bones says, drive over there and take control of the situation.

The Lord gave me this picture of the two birds sitting on the tree, watching it, and our Heavenly Father watching over that situation. And that's when I thought about the verse that we are memorizing for this week, from Isaiah 30, verse 21. You will hear a voice in your ear saying, this is the way, walk in it.

And that's the essence of the burden on my heart this morning, is that all of us know that it is our right, it is our privilege, that in every situation God wants to speak a voice in your ear. And when you hear that news, maybe, and granted, you know, I don't want to just say that I tend to be optimistic, maybe I do, but I want it to be more than just optimism. I don't want it to be a, you know, ostrich bury your head in the sands, everything's going to be okay when the calamity's coming.

But a faith, it's not blind faith even, you know, I don't think the Bible talks about blind faith. We don't close our eyes and say, we look to heaven, it says open your eyes. It's an eye-opened faith, but the question is, what are you looking at? Are you looking at the problem? Then that's worse, it's better to actually close your eyes then.

But if your eyes are fixed on him, fixing our eyes on him, the author and perfecter of our faith, I say I open my eyes and there I get faith. And in that situation, I hear a voice saying, this is the way, walk in it. And on

that day, it was simply, just be calm, don't do anything, don't leave the house, don't, just be calm.

I've got this under control and I will show you what to do when the right time is there to do it. I think any of you parents can relate to that, where you find out maybe, let's say your child was playing somewhere and you heard, let's say dad you're at work and mom calls and says he fell and hit his head or she's in pain or something like that. The initial reaction is, I'm away from the problem and therefore I need to do something, I need to go over there.

But do you hear a voice in your ear saying, this is the way, walk in it. Will you hear a voice that says, don't go, stay, I've got this. Like Jesus did, Jesus faced a situation like that.

In John 11, you read that a close friend of Jesus was sick and it's like that, there's a problem over there, run, go take care of it, you can. Like me thinking, I can go over there and figure it out or I'll help. No, Jesus heard a voice in his ear saying, this is the way, walk in it, just stay here, don't go to Bethany.

And that's why God, the father was able to do a miracle and Jesus was able to fulfill the perfect plan that the father had laid out for his life. What would not have been the perfect plan would have been for Jesus to say, father I got to go, I mean I'm not even going to wait for you to tell me, I know this is a no-brainer, I got to go there and heal him because he loves you, he loves me, you've given me the power to heal him, let's do it. Jesus would have missed the perfect plan that the father had for him.

Lazarus would have missed, I think, perhaps, I don't know, you know, let's not get too far down the path of imagining the what-ifs, Jesus finished the plan for his life that the father had for his life, that we know. But for us, will you pause for a moment when that sudden trial comes, that sudden news comes, will you pause and say, Lord I want to hear, you said that I would hear a voice in my ear saying this is the way, walk in it, speak to me Lord, speak to me. Let's turn there, Isaiah chapter 30.

I want you to see it, it's a verse we're memorizing this week and I thought I would speak on that so that as you memorize it this week, you would be able to think of situations in your life where, especially for us men, perhaps, I don't know, sisters you probably face this too and children maybe, I don't know, you probably face it too, but especially for us men that tend to think that we're the protectors and we're the chivalrous ones and all that, you know, what's the word nowadays, they use toxic masculinity for it. Especially for us, perhaps, there's a little bit of toxic masculinity that the Lord needs to break so that we're leaning on him and learning from him who was the perfect example as a man, strong, unbending, but gentle and weak and leaning on his father, the perfect example. Isaiah 30 verse 21, it says your ears, well let's begin verse 20, although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, in other words, although the Lord has been disciplining you during a period of time, although you face some difficulty and you face some discipline, your teacher will no longer hide himself but your eyes will behold your teacher, your ears will hear a word behind you, this is the way walking it whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

So this is a promise, you will see and hear Jesus himself. It's not a voice, it's not just a, you know, like a voice through a megaphone. In the schools they have that too, you know, they send an announcement through the speakers.

Is that what you expect to hear? Some kind of speaker megaphone? Have you expected to be some kind of loud megaphone that God will give you a voice? No, it's a person. It says you will see him and you will hear him and the next time you're faced with a sudden trial, pause for a moment and say, Lord Jesus,

there's only one thing that matters right now in this, not the problem, not my child that's gotten hurt or that other situation in the school or something else, there's only thing, one thing is needful. I want to see you and I want to hear you.

I want to see you and I want to hear you and oh how that will change the situation drastically. All of a sudden now eternity can come into that situation. Jesus can come into that situation and then the problem is solved.

I want to see you and I want to hear you. Let's turn to Romans chapter 8. This is our right. This is our privilege.

If you are a son of God, you have a privilege. You have a right to hear his voice as much as every one of my children has a right to hear my voice. If one of my children came to me and said, dad, you're my dad, but you never talk to me.

I never hear you speaking to me. I don't know what your voice sounds like. There's one of two things is happening there.

Either the dad is too busy with his own world that he doesn't have time to speak to his son or daughter. That's bad and it's possible that a human dad could be like that. There may be some children grow up like that, never hearing their dad talk to them.

I hope dads you take time to speak to your children, talk to them, play with them, speak at their level. Or the child is too busy doing something else that they don't hear the dad speaking. Dad is speaking, but the child's busy with their computer game or doing something else.

That's if it's here on this earth. When it comes to our heavenly father, the first is not possible. Jesus, God is speaking.

He's speaking. He cares about you. Like we have heard even already.

He knows about every detail of what's going on in your life. He's interested in your life. He wants to.

He cares about everything in your life. You're much more valuable than sparrows. In fact, you're more valuable to him than even the earth in itself.

All of this earth will pass away. The animals will pass away. The trees will pass away.

The mountains will pass away. It'll be shaken. Heaven and earth will pass away.

And as despite all of that beauty that God created, there's something that's more valuable to him and that's you. And so he's speaking. He's speaking.

And so if you haven't heard his voice, if consistently in situation after situation after situation, you find that you don't know what to do. There's an important decision to be made and I don't know. I don't know what to do.

Or something else, some some sudden calamity comes and you're like confused. I don't know what to do. Then I want to tell you, I hope you'll go back from this message to seek God and go to God and say, Lord Jesus, you paid a price with your precious blood.

That was the most precious thing there is. The blood of Jesus Christ is the most precious thing. You gave all of that for something so that I would be a child of our heavenly father.

You and I share the same heavenly father, Lord Jesus. You paid a price and just like the father spoke to you in every little situation and guided you and specifically told you not to go to Bethany in that situation, specifically said, now say this and specifically said, now do this and specifically said, now go there and you were able to finish your life perfectly. I have the same father.

If if one of my children come to me and says, dad, I hear you talking to my brother and my sister but you never talk to me, I would have to hang my head in shame. I say, I'm a bad father. Now, God is not an evil father.

We're all evil. The best of us fathers is evil compared to God. God is not partial that he would speak to Jesus in his year saying, go do this, now do that.

Now, they're trying to trap you. Say this. Ask them that other question.

They won't know what to do. Then say this other thing. They'll be so busy arguing with each other that you can just walk through that situation.

If you did it for my brother Jesus, father, I expect you to do it for me and I hope from now on that that will cause us to have what I call an expectant faith, an expecting faith that I expect to hear and if I haven't heard, I fall on my face and I don't just go on and say, well, god never speaks to me. I I I hear Santos that you say he speaks to you but he never speaks to me and just shrug our shoulders and move on with it. I used to live that life.

I'll be honest with you. God, I didn't hear God speaking to me. He was speaking but I couldn't hear him but I would hear about others.

I would read the biographies of godly men and women who heard him and who got out of tight situations and god did a miracle and say, lord, I want that life and I hope if that's your testimony where you're not sure and god, you're not sure if god is actually speaking to you or like a question. One of my children asked me years ago, lord, how do I discern between god's voice and my own voice? You children ever face that? You had adults ever face that? I do. Is it my own reasoning? Is it in my own smart thinking? Is this a worldly wise thing to do or is this the voice of god? Can you discern the voice of the holy spirit? There's only one voice of the holy spirit and there's a million others.

So, the chances that you'll pick the wrong one are pretty high and I don't mean to laugh about it but I say this is serious and I want to tell you that if you're really sincere, you really ask god to make his voice clear. He will. Let's read Romans chapter eight.

Let's sometimes I like to read the bible backwards and what I mean by that is you have to when you read a verse for example in verse twelve where it says so then you need to know what that previous verse says and then if you read verse thirteen because for if verse fourteen because verse fifteen because so since there's all those because, let's start with the verse fifteen. You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again but you have received a spirit of adoption. Now, when you read the word because or for as my bible has, that means that it's going to say something and then the result of that is actually in the previous verse, right? So, like we in our home, we have this thing, you know, sometimes our children will ask silly questions.

Why do I have to do that? And you hear people other people say well because just because we like to say because I love you. That's the end of all questions. You do it because I love you.

So, because I love you but here it is you have received a spirit of you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again but you've received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out about father, daddy. That's the reason Jesus went up to heaven. You know, children, why Jesus went up to heaven? He says in John sixteen, John fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen, especially chapters fourteen and sixteen.

He says in verse four chapter fourteen, I think that if I go up to the father, it'll be better for you. You know what's better than Jesus actually being here physically is that you can say daddy. Before that, the disciples could watch Jesus saying daddy to his father.

He would say, he would say to his daddy and they're like, man, when I see Jesus praying, it's like he's talking to his dad. I wish I could, I could have that too and Jesus said, wait, go to the upper room. I'm going to go to the father.

I'll send the Holy Spirit and then you can call him daddy too. You will have power. You will have a the Holy Spirit within you that within you, you will find that cry saying daddy.

You see how it's better for Jesus that he's in heaven for us that that Jesus is in heaven not here. If he was still here on this earth not having ascended to the father, I could still watch him call his father daddy and I wouldn't be able to call him daddy but he ascended up to heaven and he has asked the father and the father sent another helper, the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit now dwells in me and I hope he dwells in you.

If you're born again, the Holy Spirit dwells in you but you want the Holy Spirit to grow and that's why we cry out for the fullness, the increasing fullness of the Holy Spirit so that more and more in more and more situations when I'm faced with that trial, I have something, not something, someone within me who says daddy. You see the difference between me saying daddy because I have to try to, yeah, is he really my dad? Maybe and the Holy Spirit within me crying out daddy. The Holy Spirit says daddy on my behalf.

It's beautiful. So then you go back to verse 14. The result of that is all who are being led by the spirit, now the Holy Spirit has come within me and he is crying out within me daddy, Santosh's daddy, Santosh's daddy on my behalf and now he says I want to lead you.

All who are being led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. So if you want to know who is the son of God and who is the daughter of God, you can say well I said the prayer, I asked Jesus into my heart. Yes that's true but there should be some characteristic of the fact that the Holy Spirit actually dwells within you.

He's leading you. A lot of people know the daddy part. Yeah I call him daddy and the Holy Spirit calls that's great but do you know the consequence of that? As you grow spiritually, as the Holy Spirit is filling more and more of your life, now he's leading you.

So if somebody asks you this question, if you didn't know the answer already, you should know now. How do you know who is the son and daughter of God? You say are they being led by God? Now you ask yourself that question. Am I really a son of God or am I really a daughter of God? Now be careful with how you ask yourself that question.

Listen to me. If you find that you call yourself a son of God or a daughter of God but you're not being led by God, he's not leading you in specific situations. You're just perplexed.

I don't know what to do. Like okay I guess I'll do this. It seems like the best option but you're sort of there not sure if that's really God's will for you.

Then I say you go to God and say Lord somehow I'm not hearing your voice. You know he's speaking just like my children. I think they can all testify that I speak to them.

If not they'll tell me after the meeting. Dad you need to speak to me more often, less like you preached. But God is speaking.

He's always speaking and if I'm not hearing his voice, I don't have to question whether I'm actually a son or daughter of his. If you're really born again, if you have repented of all your sins of Jesus Christ, that the spirit of Christ dwells in you, you're his child. Don't let the devil, I'm not going to add to the unbelief and the doubt that the devil tries to sow in your heart.

That's not what I'm trying to do here. But what I'm trying to get all of us to understand is say Lord I am your child. I know it.

I believe that your Holy Spirit is working in me. I've repented of all known sin. I've forsaken it.

I've turned. I want to follow you but I'm not able to hear your voice and you said that the characteristic of the sons and daughters of God is that they would hear your voice and they would be led by you. Lord lead me and I think you will you'll find that God is delighted with that prayer.

When you hold him to his word. I love to think that God delights, is delighted when we hold him to his word. You know most earthly people if you hold them to your word, especially politicians, they don't like it because they said something and you're like you said you would do it.

See here it's on tape and they're like well you know but God's not like that. If you take God's God you said it he gets a big smile on his face. Okay you asked me to I'll fulfill it in your life.

It's the exact opposite of every human being that says things that they can't fulfill. God has already planned a way by which to fulfill it and then he says it. That's the way I look at it.

So he says oh really yes I did say it. Yes I'll do it for you. You I told you that I would lead you because you're my son.

You're my daughter. I'm going to lead you. Now ask me for it.

This is the God we serve. Let's go back to verse 13. The result of that where we have a spirit within us calling daddy, the spirit within us leading us step by step in every single situation.

We put to death the deeds of the body and live. This is the secret to life, eternal life. The Holy Spirit coming dwelling within us leading us step by step us putting to death the deeds of the body and living.

God wants us to live live a life of dependent on him. Now let's go back to Isaiah chapter 30 and we'll see some of the other things that he talks about in the context of hearing his voice. Isaiah 30 we read verses 20 and 21 but I want you to go back and let's look together at verse 15.

This is building up to that place. You know let's actually let's before we go there let's again let's go back a little bit. Let's start with verse 18.

Isaiah 30 verse 18. The Lord longs to be gracious to you and therefore he waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice.

How blessed are all those who long for him. O people in Zion inhabitant in Jerusalem you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you.

At the sound of your cry when he hears it he will answer you. What a wonderful promise. But look at verse 18 begins with that word therefore.

So something's going on here. They've been disciplined by God. They've been in sin.

They've been they backslidden. They've had ups and downs and ups and downs and they're sort of confused and the prophets are not speaking from the Lord. The true prophets are not there anymore and in the midst of this in the midst of their sin and the discipline and the punishment verse 15 thus the Lord God the Holy One of Israel has said in repentance and rest you will be saved in quietness and trust is your strength but you were not willing.

You wanted some other way. You wanted to remain in control of it. You wanted to be the one to figure out the problem.

You wanted to rush there to fix that problem because you had all the power to do so. Verse 16 you said no we will flee on horses. I can take care of it God.

I'll do it. Therefore you shall flee. You said we will ride on swift horses.

Therefore those who pursue shall be swift. One thousand will flee at the threat of one man. You will flee at the threat of five until you are left as a flag on a mountaintop and as a signal on a hill as in until you give up.

You thought oh I could do that. I've got this. I can figure it out and then that failed and then you tried that other thing and that failed and you tried that other thing and that failed so much so where you who used to make thousands flee now even five are making you flee.

It says until you finally give up and then you'll see that God has been longing to be gracious to you. He wants to give you his grace. That word gracious there is such a powerful word.

He wants to give you his grace. He waits on high to be compassionate to you but this verse 15 I see that's the beginning of it. If you haven't been hearing God's voice I'll tell you from my own experience this is where it finally started to open up for me and I was able to hear God's voice more consistently.

I can't say it's perfect. There are times when my flesh still wants to take control but I'll tell you what changed and I started to be able to hear the voice of God more clearly is there in verse 15. First of all repentance.

What is true repentance? I want to talk briefly on that. There's a phrase that I saw recently in Ezekiel chapter 6 that has become a beautiful picture of repentance for me. I want to hear the voice of Jesus my bridegroom.

I want to hear it clearly but there must be a repentance that begins that that happens before that. I think of it like the unclogging of the ear. I've got some wax or something built up in my ear that's why I see Jesus kind of vaguely kind of hear some sounds but I can't hear him clearly.

It's sort of you know like that man said men like trees. Is that a tree? Is that a man? Are you unsure about God's will like that? Should I do this or not? Is that a man? Is that a tree? My eyes are dim. My ears are clogged.

The peeling away of the scales the unplugging of the ears as it were is what I think of repentance. I say I'm sorry Ezekiel chapter 6 verse 9. Then those of you who escape will remember me among the nations in which they will be carried captive. So these people the people of God will be taken captive and then they will remember God and look at this how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts.

You've heard it said often in this church the fear of God is not the fear that he will hurt me but the fear that I will hurt him and here it is in that verse how I have been hurt how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from me and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed for all their abominations. This is repentance. It's turning to God and seeing how much I've hurt him by that little thing.

It's not big sins that hurt God. Yes they do. It's not just the big sins it's every single sin.

What that will do is the moment you speak to your spouse in a harsh way or in a bitter way you'll see that that's for that sin for that little careless word you spoke that Jesus had to go to the cross and how you hurt him by that little thing that you did that careless way in which you treated somebody the way in which you gossiped about somebody and spoke evil about them to somebody else you see that's your name written in Jesus wounds when that centurion stabbed that spear into Jesus side that was your sin that was poking him. They will see how they have hurt me by their adulterous hearts and they will loathe themselves. You will see how that unforgiving attitude you have towards somebody who's hurt you is your name written there in the wounds of Jesus like we sang in that song and you loathe yourself in their eyes.

See the problem is why is it that it's so difficult to repent. I found that there are a lot of people that think they've repented but haven't really. I've seen that in my own life as well.

I thought I'd repented but I hadn't really repented because I was kind of I felt bad for what I did but I didn't really see it as my name written in that wound. Think of a specific spot say on Jesus body where the thorn was pressed the crowns were pressed down or this they poked his hands or they poked his hands poked his side that was me doing it with that little sin that I thought was a little sin and if we don't have a right revelation of the seriousness of our sin we tend to not really repent of it and tend to repeat it. We tend to justify ourselves well yeah I was you know I was in a I was having a had a headache or I was in a I was having a rough day or I got pushed to the limit and we make up all these excuses and I'll tell you the one who has really seen how much sin hurts Jesus hurts God will make no excuses for their sin.

They just say Lord I have no excuse it doesn't matter what others might have done I hurt you by my sin. Think about unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is a sin is a very very serious serious sin.

All sins take us to hell but unforgiveness is the one that almost dooms you from the outset because you could be un you could hold unforgiveness towards somebody you refuse to forgive them and you're asking for forgiveness for all your other sins and God says I'm not even listening to you until you let go of that

unforgiveness and you see unforgiveness as a sin that caused Jesus to go to the cross. A self-loathing it's this same phrase comes further in Ezekiel chapter 36 and that's a wonderful chapter Ezekiel 36 where it talks about God giving us a new heart taking away the heart of stone and putting a heart of flesh within us and putting his spirit within us in Ezekiel chapter 36 after so verse 25 Ezekiel 36 verse 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean I will cleanse you from all your filthiness from all your idols I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh verse 27 I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will be careful to observe my ordinances you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers so you will be my people and I will be your God verse 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness and I will call for the grain and multiply it and I will not bring a famine on you I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations and when God blesses us and puts a new heart within us and puts a spirit within us what should that cause us to do when you see somebody else fall and when somebody else hurts you and you have a hard time forgiving them verse 31 you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations you will see every sin as extremely serious think of that phrase that we sing mine mine was their transgression but thine the deadly pain recently just actually this week a couple days ago I was meditating on 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 if you'll turn that with me 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 it's a wonderful chapter where it talks about if anyone is in Christ he's a new creature the old things have passed away a new creation but then it says in verse 21 he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf he made him who knew no sin that word to be is actually added in to explain the meaning he made him who knew no sin sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him and I got a picture this week that has really challenged me I thought I would share that with you you know we hear often sometimes of little children being abused or taken advantage of molested and it always grieves me when I hear that thing here's an innocent little child beaten by their parents or taken advantage of and class bullied in class in school little think about a little little child think about the littlest child helpless little child and somebody in a position of power takes advantage of it abuses it or something like that in my mind that's one of the worst possible things anybody could ever do to hurt a little helpless little child innocent as they are but you know that even that child is not as innocent as Jesus was that little child born as helpless and weak and anybody could take advantage of it I mean think about the little little babies in our church you see how they are they if you drop them they'll drop they'll just drop to the floor you have to be very careful when you're holding them they're innocent their minds are pure their hearts are pure in an earthly sense and yet Jesus was more innocent than them more pure than they are they're all we're all born in sin he wasn't there was not even a trace of sin in him and yet I got this picture of Jesus like that innocent little baby being abused being molested being hurt by the sin that was put on him and I got a picture of of sin my sin I said Lord I never want to forget that I would never do anything to hurt a little baby but I did when I when I sinned against Jesus who's far more innocent than that little baby think about it has it does that change your perspective on sin now well you you can justify a little bit of a bad mood or a bad attitude towards somebody when you see that this that sin is worse than you doing something hurtful to a little baby because you did it to Jesus the sinless lamb of God he made him who knew no sin sin on my behalf it makes me grateful I'm tremendously grateful to Jesus none of us so let's go over to chapter seven second Corinthians chapter seven what what should that do for us what I'm talking we're talking about repentance because I've had periods in my time in my life right I sinned I got caught and then I felt bad and this happens I see you read this with mega church pastors with all over the world you see people who they want to apologize once they get caught and I'm not saying that you can't apologize after you get caught but you have to put a little bit of a question mark

over that if you're really honest if you really want to judge yourself for what purpose that you want to make sure that the repentance that you have over that is genuine because I've fallen for the trap of false repentance where I'm like yeah I got caught so I feel bad and I I'm sorry I'll try to do better next time I now I put a question mark over that kind of repentance on myself not to judge anybody else but I urge you to do the same for your own life if we judge ourselves rightly we shall not be judged so I want to make sure that I that there's a real repentance there I put a question mark over it I said Lord I want you to prove that the repentance in me over what I did and got caught over is real because the chances that it's not real are higher if I repented after I got caught right so I say Lord I want to really repent I want to make sure it's genuine repentance repentance that will bear fruit in eternity and you read about some people who repented that way in 2nd Corinthians 7 verse 11 they had sinned horribly there was a man in their church who was living in horrible sin they knew about it they did nothing about it and they let it go on and on and on and on and Paul rebuked them in the first letter to church in Corinth and the result of that you know when when when a godly man rebukes you how you respond to that will make a big difference I tell you this I've seen this over and over again when a godly man rebukes you how you respond could alter the course of your life for all eternity you could sit there and stew and says well he didn't really understand or uh you know make justification for it or you could say I know it was a small thing but that's why Jesus died on the cross that small little thing that I thought was a small thing is why Jesus died on the cross thank God for this godly man this person who loves me so much to rebuke me and show me it but the chances that we still repent are genuinely are low but look at what the church in Corinth did the sorrow that is and I'm going to let me read here from how the paraphrase in the living bible and the message paraphrases this after you after I rebuked you Paul says to this church in Corinth you no longer shrugged your shoulders just like oh yeah I slipped up yeah I woke up in a bad mood and so I spoke to my wife that way you no longer shrugged your shoulders but became more earnest and more sincere and more anxious to get rid of the sin you were that you were shown read that listen to that carefully again you no longer shrugged your shoulders at sin but you became more earnest and sincere and anxious to get rid of the sin that you were shown you had fear because of what happened and longed for me to come and help so here was Paul writing a letter like a spanking from from far away long distance spanking and they said they didn't want him to stay away they said oh I can't wait for you to come that's true repentance you know how does the the psalmist say let the godly man strike me it is medicine for me I'll turn the other cheek as it were it says I need more I see that you love me so much is there something else that God is showing you about a need in my life this is the correct attitude to repentance because you see you don't justify it as a small thing as a little slip up you see the seriousness of why Christ had to die and you're thankful for the correction and the rebuke that opens your eyes to see it you had fear because of what happened and you longed for me to come and help because Paul's arrival would allow them to now know how to move forward with it you went right to work on the problem and cleared it up you didn't delay and you did everything you could to make it right this is repentance let's judge ourselves family over repentance over the things in the past maybe I found in my life that when when sins have a way of reappearing and falling back into the same old sins you think I thought I was done with that bad moods speaking lightly those sorts of things it's probably because in fact I'm fairly certain it's because the repentance wasn't genuine that somehow I thought I felt bad enough but not really let it result in what I just read not a shrugging of the shoulders but an earnestness a sincerity an anxiousness to be rid of that sin completely that Christ would remove it if you're ever in a situation where a godly person rebukes you consider yourself blessed consider yourself blessed if you receive correction from a godly man who really knows God and welcome it receive it I've learned that that's the secret to me ultimately being completely set free from sin because it gives me the right attitude towards sin when I see Jesus death in it so repentance the other thing it says

it's repentance and rest in Isaiah 30 repentance and rest I want to talk about rest briefly before I close and he goes on to say in the latter part of that verse in quietness and strength in quietness and trust sorry not strength in quietness and trust rest quietness and trust again think about what we're what we're thinking about hearing the voice of God begins with repentance knowing God's voice in every single situation hearing it clearly begins with repentance but then there's something else that's needed and that is rest Hebrews 12 in verse 2 we're told about two things that will prevent us from seeing the face of our forerunner clearly you know we're going to read in verse 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith if you fix your eye on Jesus you'll see him you'll hear his voice clearly if you're not seeing him clearly and not hearing clearly there's two things that he talks about in verse 1 that prevent us from hearing the voice of Jesus clearly and seeing him clearly the first is sin we already talked about that repentance repent completely radically thoroughly of all sin the sin which so easily entangles us but then he also talks about encumbrances it's a big word weights weights that slow you down when you see Jesus and you're trying to get there and you think you're running but you're carrying these weights the weights that slow us down and I want to talk about one specific area and that is when we experience prayers that aren't answered the way we want them to be answered I met so many people and I can think of times in my life when I lost sight of my bridegroom I couldn't hear his voice as clearly because there was prayers that I had prayed that I wanted certain things I wanted God to answer my life and he didn't answer them the way I wanted them to be answered maybe he said no or he said wait or he allowed me to have something in my life that was uncomfortable for me and I allowed that to become like a weight that slowed me down can you relate to that I hope I'm expressing myself clearly in what I'm trying to say that those things where I had a little bit of a grievance towards God a little bit of like God yeah I know you love me and all that but that situation I felt like you didn't handle it right for me or you did me wrong in some way and somehow you didn't answer my prayer the way you could have answered it I know you could have but you didn't why not Lord and that becomes a weight that slows you down because you're obsessed with it that's constantly on your mind like ah God you could have done it and you didn't answer it maybe it's a healing maybe it's some material blessing maybe it's a job situation or something from your past and then recently I was reminded of this story in John chapter 5 of a man whose prayers went unanswered for a long time and it was his salvation this is the man at the pool of Bethesda and he prayed for you know he it says he was sick for 38 years and I don't know if that means he was 38 years old or he got some sickness or some injury that caused him to become paralyzed at some age and then 38 years after that but we know he was sick for 38 years and I would like to think that for at least most if not all of those 38 years he was praying please Lord why did you allow let's let's take uh let's play with the story a little bit let's say he had an accident somebody maybe his like that you know the story of Mephibosheth his nurse dropped him and so he was paralyzed for the rest of his life here this man maybe it's a similar story somebody was careless with him dropped him and now the man can't walk and he's got a little bit of a grievance towards that person who dropped him and also towards God God why did you allow this to happen in my life I've had those times in my life where I thought I was sincere I thought I was hearing the voice of God I made a mistake made a mess of my life now I'm dealing with consequences as a result of that here's this man 38 years and he happens to I don't know how he made it to the pool of Bethesda maybe somebody brought him there and dumped him there but he made it there he says okay you're good you're going to answer me Lord because I know this is where you do miracles and every so often as the story goes an angel would come and stir the waters and whoever was the first to jump into that water would get healed this was of God it was a genuine miracle and here's this man says I'm this close to the miracle I'm really this close to the answer to the solution for my life's problems and he prays and waters are stirring somebody else jumps in front of him missed it okay I'm praying praying watching the water just for a little glimpse of

some stirring about to happen and I'm going to get my prayer in first and try to roll in there because he doesn't have strength in his legs try to get as close to the edge of the pool and jump in to hope to get in first pray missed it missed it missed it missed it missed it and this man I love this man because he represents 38 years of missed opportunities unanswered prayers as you will God answers every prayer I believe that you've heard that in this church as well yes no or wait and God consistently answered no well actually wait and he thought it was no he's saying wait now he couldn't hear it he didn't hear the voice of Jesus he didn't know who Jesus was why did God allow this man to have to wait for 38 years I'll tell you why because he had something far better than just healing he wanted him to see Jesus 38 years later Jesus would come much better than an angel and I want to tell you here's the essence of what I'm saying dear brothers and sisters this has helped me a lot in my own life if God delays in answering a prayer in your life it's because you're looking to an angel for an answer you look into something else some other temporary solution and God wants you to meet with Jesus himself he wants your eye to behold your teacher behold your bridegroom he wants you to hear the voice of Jesus himself not an angel and hold on dear brother dear sister if you don't give up because the worst thing that that could have that man could have done would have been to just give up in unbelief let's read the story there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate verse two a pool which is called in Hebrew Bethesda having five porticoes when Jesus now verse five when Jesus a man was there who had been ill for 38 years when Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition Jesus knows how long you've been in that condition dear brother he knows how long you've been asking him for an answer to that miracle for him to do that miracle and he said to them do you wish to get me well he's hearing the voice of Jesus for the first time until then it's been the commotion around him the person rejoicing who got the answer to his prayer the sound of the water stirring all the other noises around him that represent deflated hopes and finally Jesus shows up and he says do you want to give him well and he still doesn't know it's Jesus but at least he's hearing him now sir I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up but while I'm coming another steps down before me and Jesus said see the rest you see the contrast between trying to get into the pool first the anxiety the worry your tenseness the tension there I better get in there first before somebody else I better grab it before somebody else gets a hold of me oh he got it again Lord why did he get the answer and then the rest when Jesus solves the problem Jesus very quietly said to him just pick up your pallet and walk quite a different thing from the commotion of the pool Jesus says just pick up your you don't need a pool you don't need all that other stuff you don't need an angel to stir the waters just pick up your bed and walk you finally heard the voice of your bridegroom you've seen him and immediately the man became well you couldn't see it happening there was no stirring of the waters at that time inside his body the healing happened that outside I don't think you could see the healing happen on the outside and my dear brother and sister God wants to do a work in our lives that begins on the inside where we have learned to listen to the voice of our bridegroom learn to listen to the voice of our teacher we've seen him and we've become well and um if you I'll close with this verse first Peter chapter three some of you I know many of us are praying for many things you're praying for the salvation of our loved ones maybe you're praying for healing for some of your children that suffer there's many things like this and here's a wonderful verse that teaches us that God understands first Peter chapter three read this little phrase Hebrews first Peter 3 verse 20 who once were disobedient when the patience of God kept waiting it's a little bit of a redundant phrase right the patience of God kept waiting but I love it God is patient patience itself has an implication of waiting you're patient when the patience of God keeps waiting he shows you just how patient he is with us and now he says be patient love is patient and when you're waiting on God and waiting on him and it seems like like the other verse is second Peter 3 verse 9 says don't regard the God's the patience of God as slowness Lord why are you so slow to answer me no he the patience of God

is waiting for something far greater than the miracle that you're looking for for you to see Jesus for you to hear his voice God wants to speak to us Jesus wants you to hear his voice he wants to you to see him in every situation he wants you to know him dear children dear brothers dear sisters this week in every situation that you face I hope the cry from our hearts will be Lord I want to hear your voice Lord I want to see you and I don't mind how long I don't I care less now about the answer to my prayer as I do about hearing your voice and seeing you and then I know all will be well in your time you will give me what I need in your time you will solve all these problems I want you to hear your voice I want to see you amen

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