

THE LOVE OF GOD

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It is good to be in the presence of the Lord and in the congregation of the saints. What would it be like if we were in a religious service where everyone around us were sinners? It would be our responsibility to get up and preach the Word so that they would all get saved. It is very precious to be in the midst of the congregation of the saints because we have one Lord, one baptism, one faith, and one calling, as it speaks in Ephesians, and one hope of that calling (Ephesians 4:5).

God's promise to us is that He will never leave us, nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). There are so many promises in the Word of God. I think that the promise (He will never leave us, nor forsake us) stands as the pinnacle of all promises, because how many times do we draw upon it in our time of need? When everything seems insurmountable and we do not see the ray of sunshine coming through the clouds, God says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." This is the God we serve.

We sang the song this morning, God is Love, Heaven and Earth Declare it. Farther down in the song it says, "I want the world to share it." And then, "I can feel Him in the air." God says that He is always there, so if we don't feel Him in the air, does that mean God is gone? God is not gone. It's just that our sensitivity of where He is, is missing or gone from us. We are to be a people of faith. It's not by what we see, it's not by what we feel, it is not by what we think. It is that God is and He is love.

The Word says He first loved us (I John 4:19). Not that we first loved Him, but He first loved us. The Bible says no man can come to the Father except He first draws him (John 6:44). So, it is in God's love, that even before the fall of Adam and Eve, He made that plan and purpose for all creation, and that way is through His Son, Jesus Christ (Revelation 13:8). The Word says, ***God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*** (John 3:16). That is how much God loves the world. That is how much God loves us. We were part of the world and yet He came and manifested Himself to

us to bring us out of that place of darkness and to bring us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, that we might begin to grow and to manifest His very nature and character. Hallelujah!

I would like us to turn this morning to Matthew 22:34-40, ***But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.***³⁵ ***Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,***³⁶ ***Master, which is the great commandment in the law?***³⁷ ***Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.***³⁸ ***This is the first and great commandment.***³⁹ ***And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.***⁴⁰ ***On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*** Did you know it speaks of two commandments here, but really they are one? When this lawyer came to tempt Him, he was trying to say, "Well, you have all these commandments, which one is the greatest?" Yet, Jesus didn't give him just one. He gave him two, yet He really only gave him one.

If we go to John, we begin to read about love. We know that John is the apostle of love. He was the closest to Jesus. He was the one that knew the very heartbeat of the Lord. He wrote that we are to love one another. He talked about, ***He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now*** (I John 2:9). In First and Second John, the apostle expounds unto us what this love is. He says, ***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*** (I John 1:7). You see, when we begin to look at this, in order for us to love one another, we must first love Him. I cannot love you with the love of Jesus Christ if I am not in a relationship with God. When I am abiding in the love of God, then I can love you with the love of the Lord.

You remember that song that we sing, "Oh, I love you with the love of the Lord. Oh, I love you with the love of the Lord. For I see in you the glory of my King, and I love you with the love of the Lord." If you can't see Jesus in your brother, your place of relationship with Him is not as it should be. John said, ***He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*** So, when we have that blockage towards any blood-washed Christian, it's a problem within us that God wants to deal with. It's not an isolated problem, you see. The scripture says that there is nothing that has befallen you but that which is common to man (I Corinthians 10:13).

The greatest teacher that we have, of course, is the Holy Ghost. This Word is part of the Holy Ghost. It is God, you see. When we begin to want to love God... Remember now, this first commandment that He commands us is

that we are to love the Lord our God, with what? It says, with ALL of our heart, with ALL of our soul, and with ALL of our mind. So now, when we begin to look at that, we begin to see what that encompasses. It is that everything that is within us IS to love God.

How do we love God? Scripture tells us that we love God when we do His commandments (John 14:15). When we begin to see that, the greatest thing we must have is this Word inside of us. The only way we (you and I) can be changed is by the Word of the Lord. I don't know why, but as I'm sharing, the song comes to me, "By the Word of the Lord, we are made overcomers. By the Word of the Lord, we are able to stand." So, we see here the importance of the Word. A problem that we have is that we have to deal with this flesh nature which stands as a blockage between God and us.

How many of us desire to partake fully in the Word of God? Yet how many of us have to fight to partake in the Word of God? You have to break from the ways of the old man and discipline yourself. You have to come into a place of purposing that you are going to feed upon the Word of God. There are so many things that are in this world that we are being bombarded with. You can be assured, though we may not know of Satan's full plan, Satan does. The devil will do everything he can to stop the Word of God from coming into God's people. Let's give an example. When you purpose to spend an hour in prayer and in reading the Word on a daily basis, how many of you find it an easy thing to do? Some of us might find it hard to do for even fifteen minutes. The wonderful thing is, the more that you begin to submit yourself to the Word of God, the easier it will become.

So you see, brethren, we are to love the Lord our God with ALL our heart, with ALL our soul, and with ALL our mind. When we begin to look into this Word, we see that God is so marvelous. God created the heavens and the earth. We can learn from the natural level. There was a natural Adam and Eve. All the men and women of the Bible lived just like you and I. They were raised up in a human environment and came into an awareness of God. When we begin to look at this, God, in His thought pattern, wanted to lay down for all of humanity what was His testimony and witness in the earth. Without this Bible, we would never know our 6,000 years of history and what it is that God intended to speak to us.

We have in the scripture men who were overcomers and others who were not. God could have written about all the men that overcame and that would be it, but why would God put in all the men, both good and evil? It was for our benefit. It was for our purpose. When we begin to search and study the Old Testament and look at Israel (natural Israel), Israel is a type of the church. When we read of these men and women in the Bible, particularly those who were Israelites... I'm thinking specifically of the long lineage of kings and everyone that was associated with it. I'm thinking of their armies, the captains,

their ranks, all sorts of people. They were like us, men and women who have had the same opportunity to come under the same Lord, to serve the Lord and to love Him with ALL their hearts because they were given the Word of God, and how they were to follow it. Now, they did not have the Blood, they did not have the Holy Ghost, but they had the law. The law was not meant to bring them fully unto perfection, but if there was anything that was righteous, the Word says the law was it. These men and women had to live by the law, yet there were those who followed the law and those who did not. God gives us these examples that we might begin to meditate and understand what He desires to show us about their natures. Hallelujah!

It's interesting to see that when Israel went away from God and began to desire to be like other nations, it was the beginning of their digression. I Samuel 8:4-9 shows us that Israel desired to have a king like other nations and they refused God as their king. Remember, Samuel went to God and was grieved. Do you know why? Samuel was the last of the long line of judges. God spoke to him, "They have not rejected you, Samuel, they have rejected Me" (I Samuel 8:7). After this, God gave them what they wanted. A Benjamite named Saul was raised up and anointed king.

There was a problem with Saul. He did not follow wholly after the Lord. God gave him everything he needed to be king. He anointed him. He had Samuel the prophet. He had the strength, the power and the anointing to defeat his enemies when he went out to battle. Yet, because of a character weakness within him, he began to disobey God. Not once, but on a progressively downward spiral.

It came to a point in Saul's life that, through his disobedience, the kingdom was given to another. This should cause us to fear the Lord. We never know when our transgressions come before the Lord and He says, "The cup is full." Did you ever think about that? There are men and women that you and I know in the church that, in their motivations, there is a problem. They think they can out-think or out-smart God. Isn't that foolish? Think about it.

I know a brother who had a problem in his soul. He dabbled with the end-time message. He had one foot in this Word and another foot in the Outer Court church. He shared one time with me, "You know, I probably would be a lot stronger if I really knew Jesus was coming next year." He went on to say, "My problem is, He may be coming in five years, so I can still do these certain things." My heart went out to the brother. I don't know why he chose that time to share that with me. It wasn't something he just went around sharing. I think God just opens a doorway where He allows you to see into a man's heart. Why? That you might pray for them to see them delivered.

This example shows us the condition of the church today. God revealed from the beginning why He made a tabernacle that was three parts: Outer

Court, Holy Place and Holy of Holies. God told Moses to make this natural tabernacle, yet this natural tabernacle has a spiritual meaning and has a fullness of the outcome of what that is to be. When Jesus came and began to minister the Word, He spoke the parable of some bearing thirty, some sixty and some an hundredfold (Matthew 13:123).

We see the Outer Court church. It is part of the church. It is God's property. God's whole purpose is to save the church from the destruction. This is why the Word of God that is being manifested to the church at this time is so very important. When we speak about the message of the Kingdom, or the message of the end-time (you can put a lot of different names to it), the fact is that God is wanting to come fully within His people. The church is playing church and is going to be left out in the dark at midnight. You don't have to be in a denomination to be in the Outer Court church. We can be an Outer Court church right here. We can be playing church without the presence and reality of God in our very midst. Hallelujah!

I want to share something today, because I was thinking about these kings. Of course, we saw what happened with Saul's disobedience. The kingdom was taken away. Samuel said, "This kingdom will be taken away and given to someone much better" (I Samuel 15:28). This better person was David. I want us to think about this man, David, who was a natural man like you and me. God said there was something special about this man. As Samuel went to Jesse to anoint David as king, God spoke these words, "How long will you mourn for Saul?" (I Samuel 16:1).

Sometimes we hold on to things of the past. God is not a God of the past, He's a God of the present and the future. Sometimes the things of the past we tend to hold on to, but we have to go on with God. The church today is to go on with God, regardless of what is to happen. The Word says it's going to come to pass that the Outer Court will be trampled underneath.

God spoke to Samuel to quit mourning for Saul. "Rise up! Go to Bethlehem to the family of Jesse and there anoint one of his sons to be king." I Samuel 16:6-7, ***And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.***

God's whole intention was to raise up a king whose heart was after God. As we begin to look at David and as we meditate on him, it is marvelous to see this man. This man had problems. David had problems, just like you and me. He was not a man of perfection. He had weaknesses. Yet, there was something working in him that had the character and nature, not only to become king,

but to be a benchmark for all other kings after him. That was David.

David started out very early in his life when he came to fight Goliath. He was a young lad (16 years of age, I believe) but, it is very interesting, because at 16, he was ready to not only fight Goliath, but to defeat him. He had boldness because of his relationship with God that no one else in Israel had at that time. All of his training and tutoring was in a field, in a pasture with sheep, tending the sheep. He was obeying his father, because his father sent him to be a keeper of the sheep.

You read what David wrote in the Psalms. I believe some of the Psalms were the very things he had learned out in that field in his time alone with God. In Psalm 144:1, David writes, ***Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*** The basis where he learned that was in the fields.

I Samuel 17 shares how, in obedience to his father, David took cheese and bread to the battlefield and was to bring word back to his father of how his brethren were faring. As he came to the battlefield, Goliath was standing in the midst cursing the Israelite army and cursing the God of this army. Boldness came upon David. In verse 26, ***...for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*** Where did he get such boldness? He got it from walking with God on a day-to-day basis. I imagine it was a quiet place, just God, the sheep, and David. It said that as he went up, and I don't want to go into the whole story of David and Goliath, but one of his brothers rose up in jealousy saying, "Why camest thou down hither? I know thy pride and naughtiness of heart" (I Samuel 17:28). David then went before Saul. Saul said, "You are just a youth!" David replied, "God was with me when the lion and the bear came. I overcame them." He went on to say, "As I overcame the lion and the bear, I shall also overcome this Philistine" (I Samuel 17:31-37).

Where did he acquire this boldness? He obtained it by being in God's presence. When danger came, he utilized the presence of God to fight the enemies (the lion and the bear) that were coming against the sheep. This enabled him to write, ***Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight*** (Psalm 144:1). He knew the power and salvation of his God. It wasn't in him. It had to bring a fear upon Saul, because who in their right mind would send a 16-year-old against Goliath except they had a fear? "There is something about this man, this young lad, that what he is saying must be true. I don't see any courage like this in all of Israel." These were mighty men. Israel's finest. Hallelujah! We see that he went down to the field that day and he won.

I like to think of that battle. Think of Goliath coming out. He is looking down at David and speaks, "Is this the best you can give me?" Seeing that

David is a lad, Goliath doesn't even walk away. He said, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?" David prophesied, ***This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands*** (I Samuel 17:46-47). Hallelujah! This young man knew God. That is why God anointed David to be king. He was a man after God's own heart.

We talk about how God is love. We sang, "Awaken my heart to know Thy love and to love Thee in return, freely flowing from an awakened heart." It means that as David had a relationship with God, so ought we. It was a two-way communication. It was not one-way. Now, God has a one-way communication with the world. He so loves the world that He would not want any to perish but that all would come to resurrection life. But how many refuse?

David's heart was awakened unto God. David not only knew His love, but returned that love by walking with God and moving in His presence. David's character grew and he moved in the anointing that came upon him. He moved in much wisdom and in much love. As he knew God, he moved in God's love. How can we tell that? David had a problem. Once David began to have victories, first over Goliath, then remember when his problems started? They went out against the Philistines and all of Israel began to rejoice in the victories. The people began to shout, "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 18:7). Well, there was one man, and he was the king, and that didn't sit well with him. It said that from that day on, Saul's heart turned against David (I Samuel 18:9).

Now David had a big problem! It wasn't like one of his big brothers. Saul was king and David was in the household of the king. He was brought into a position in the king's house. He sat at the king's table. We begin to look at the story of David and see that Saul rose up in anger, took a javelin, but missed him. David must have said to himself, "Hey, I think he doesn't like me." It's peculiar that even Jonathan had to question his father's motives after awhile. It took several times for Jonathan to realize, "David, you better flee for your life, because my father is out for you."

From that time on, David ran. He fled from Saul. Saul sought for his life. God's hand of protection was upon David. David was alone against the king and all of Israel. He fled into the wilderness and the scripture tells us that God brought people to David. I Samuel 22:2 says, ***And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain***

over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. They began to move. Their movement was to get away from Saul.

Saul was constantly after David, yet God always turned the thing around. When Saul seemed to have the upper hand, God turned it around. David was given the opportunity to slay Saul, yet there was something in David that could never do it. His men wanted to do it. They said, "God has given you favor this day because He has given your enemy into your hand. Let us slay him at once." David's reply was, **Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?** (I Samuel 26:9).

Let us look at how he responded to Saul. There came two opportunities. One time was in the cave at Engedi and the other was when he was lying down. In both of these situations (as Saul slept), David did something other than take his life. He either took the cloth of his garment or he took a spear to show that he had an opportunity to kill Saul, but he chose not to. **After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea** (I Samuel 24:14). David recognized God's hand upon Saul, thus always giving respect to God's anointed. It mattered not that the Spirit of the Lord had been lifted. It didn't change a thing! Once he was anointed, that anointing was there. David would not put his hand against God's anointed.

I'm sharing this because I want us to understand what type of heart David had. As he grew, we see that after the second time, Saul never sought for David's life again. Saul's days were numbered. Saul and his sons were killed by the Philistines and that began David's reign as king.

There are offshoots to this story. The captain of the host, Abner, who was the captain of Saul's army, and Joab, who was the captain of David's army... Even among David's men, some of these men (like Joab) had a problem. Joab didn't have a heart like David; he had character weaknesses that brought judgment to him.

We know that David had weaknesses, but there was a difference. David always found repentance. He could repent! Joab didn't repent, you understand. As we look at Joab's life, he progressed to captain over the whole army of Israel and still he kept making mistakes. These were serious mistakes that cost him his own life.

One of the first mistakes came after Saul died. There were skirmishes between the two armies and in one of the battles, Joab's brother went out after Abner. Abner would not slay Joab's brother. Abner said, "Turn to my side. You are Joab's brother. I don't want to hurt you." The man would not listen. It was either kill Joab's brother, Asahel, or be killed. So Abner slew Asahel (II Samuel 2:22). This was something Joab always remembered. Later on, the time came when Abner came to David in a way of peace and spoke, "Let us

unite all of Israel together." David took him for his word, agreed, and went out. Later Joab came to Abner in quiet to speak with him. Abner, not knowing, was killed when Joab pulled out his sword and slew him.

Let us look at David's reaction. Here was this host of Saul's army and yet David wept and fasted for this loss. It touched all of Israel and the scriptures recorded it. ***Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?*** (II Samuel 3:38).

Now Joab continued to be the captain of this great army of Israel, but he made another large character mistake when Absalom wanted to rule, remember? It was coming to the final battle with Absalom and David instructed them, "Whatever you do, let no one touch Absalom, but let him live" (I Samuel 18:5). And yet, Joab would not let him live. They found him hanging from a tree by his locks of hair and nobody wanted to touch him because they knew what the king had instructed. Yet, Joab, I tell you, his heart was far from the presence of God. He rejected the words of the king and slew Absalom. His nature and character were so contrary that he spoke roughly to the king because he wept for his son.

But, God's judgment came upon Joab. His judgment came upon him in the time when Solomon began to rule. David instructed Solomon at his death, "Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace" (I Kings 2:6). And though Joab ran in and grabbed hold of the horns of the altar, the judgment was there because of his life. You see, the scripture always reveals to us God's ways pertaining to situations and circumstances and what happens when we don't follow His ways. In Jeremiah 29:11, ***For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*** This is the God we serve. The reason we don't understand God is because we don't understand His Word as we should. This is why it is essential that we study to show ourselves approved unto God.

We should purpose in our heart that this Bible, this Word, is not just words upon the page, but they are life to us. They are life to us, and the key to the Bible being life to us is the key by which our hearts open up to God.

When we talk of the right character and nature before God, we can see that David found it. David was not any different than you and I, as a man, but he knew this one thing, ***For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.***¹⁷ ***The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*** (Psalm 51:16-17). The scripture verse says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). And many of these men did not fear God as they should.

Let us continue to look at David. Remember when he brought up the ark

to Jersualem? You know, David made a mistake. He thought, "Well, I'm just going to bring it up." And remember what happened? They were bringing up the ark and one of the men, Uzzah, tried to steady the ark and he was killed right on the spot. The scripture says that it displeased David and caused him to be afraid saying, "How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?" (II Samuel 6:9). So he went and sought God and he came to understand that he needed to do it in God's order, God's fashion, and he did it according to what was written in the Word. The Levites were to be in charge of the keeping and moving of the Tabernacle. Then the ark was moved according to divine order and they brought it up to Jerusalem with great joy and thanksgiving. Again, David's heart was right before God.

It is recorded that King Hezekiah did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that David his father did (II Chronicles 31:20). He destroyed the idolatry in Jerusalem. When the Assyrians came up to take Jerusalem, Hezekiah cried out to the Lord and his prayer for deliverance was answered. This man knew how to repent like David did. It came to pass that Hezekiah was sick unto death and the prophet Isaiah came to him. Isaiah brought a word for him and it was to set his house in order for he was to die. The scripture says that Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, prayed to the Lord and wept (II Kings 20:3). It says that as Isaiah was walking out, he was still in the palace, God spoke to him, "Turn around and go tell Hezekiah, 'You shall live.'" Hallelujah! He went immediately back in and it says, ***Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: be-hold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years*** (verses 5 and 6). And Hezekiah inquired, "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?" Isaiah said, "This sign will the Lord show. Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go back ten degrees?" Hezekiah replied and said that it was easier to go forward than backwards, so he told Isaiah to let the shadow go backwards. Well, praise the Lord, the sun went backwards ten degrees. God did it!

Yet, Hezekiah did something very foolish. What he did should cause us to always fear God. It is a good thing to fear God, because He's no respecter of persons. Do you understand why this is so needful for us? Because if we think, "Well, I'm saved by the Blood of Jesus. I have been anointed of God. Maybe I have the right to just do what I want here, or to fall into sin here. God will forgive me. I'm a good guy." Uh, uh! No! God is no respecter of persons!

Hezekiah had this delegation of strangers that came from a far away land, a place called Babylon. These ambassadors came in desiring to know of the king, and Hezekiah revealed to them all of the wealth in his house and in the land. Now, can you imagine the wealth he showed them? Though the wealth was not at the level it was during Solomon's day, Jerusalem was still of great wealth.

Now Isaiah comes again. You know, the Word of the Lord always comes to us. God is so faithful, whether we want it or not. Come on now, let's think of it. How many of us, at one time or another in our lives, did not want to hear the Word of the Lord? We were on a path to do a certain thing or were thinking we were okay when we were not okay. Do you know why God has to bring a Word? It is because we are not listening in our hearts and that's why God brings some outside source. It is because we're not hearing God within.

Now, Isaiah comes and he says, "What hast thou done?" (II Kings 20:14). And, of course, Hezekiah said, "Oh, these people, they came from a far away country." And he said, "What have you showed them?" Hezekiah said, "Everything." He forsook his wisdom, his relationship with God as king. And the Word of the Lord from Isaiah said, "Thus saith the Lord, there cometh a day where everything you have shown will be taken away," and that his sons were going to be taken away to be eunuchs in the kingdom of Babylon (verse 18). You know, the Word is so direct to us that, as we live, we should obey God with all of our hearts.

Now, let us go back to David. Because this is not a chronological word, it comes as I believe the Lord puts it in my heart. But David, David knew what to do, and because his relationship was with God, he continually had victory and he just automatically knew what to do. Just like he did when Saul wanted to take his life and David wouldn't touch him. It was because David knew God and, so it was as he reigned as king. They had continual victory.

This is what God wants to give to us. That we might know God in such a way that we would have that victorious life in Him. Let us go by faith. Let us believe God.

God wants us to be united as one, and the way that we are united is when we see Him. That's how we become united one with another. The devil is out to destroy us, brethren, one way or the other. You know, he may not physically destroy us, but he can spiritually destroy us if we let him - if we let down our guard, if we allow the enemy to come in like Hezekiah did.

How do we love God with all of our hearts? By keeping Him as the center of focus in our lives. I deliver mail to a brother, and we have a short time of fellowship for a few minutes each day. From his business, I go across the street to an insurance company. I walked in there one morning after talking with this brother and meditating on the Word that we were discussing. As I went in to this business, the owner of the insurance company was sitting there with his secretary and several other workers. Apparently, the owner was having a hard day. So he looks at me and says, "Why do you have a smile on your face?" And I said, "Do you really want to know?" He said, "Yes!" And, of course, you see, you've got five people listening. I replied, "Well, in the book of Isaiah, chapter 26:3, it says, ***Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is***

stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." He said, "I'm going to have to think about that, to take all that in." And he started saying about how he was having a bad day. I said, "Well, I've just been thinking about God and the Word of God in the scripture," and was able to testify of the goodness of God.

As I left this place of business, I realized it just came out of me. I, of myself, would not have done what I did. I would not have thought of that scripture if my mind wasn't on God, if I wasn't in the place of being in the Spirit because, without God, I'm basically a very timid person. I'm a very fearful person. I'm aware of, "What is this person going to think? How am I going to stumble?" It was the Spirit of God that just came upon me and gave me the boldness to speak it to that man. I believe that God wants to save that man. So, we conversed some more and I continued on my job. The burden came to pray for him. This is what God wants.

This is our inheritance; our inheritance is in God. Our anointing is in God. Our place of living is in God, and everything we desire to do and to be, as sons of God, is going to come to pass as we believe God and walk with Him. It's just automatic. You can't stop the flow of God. There's no way you can. Oh, yes! We think we can, but if God has His way, and you want God, God is going to deal with your flesh. And it is going to give way to the Holy Ghost because you desire more of you than you desire of God, this thing will be kept from you.

In John 7:38, Jesus rose at the end of the great feast and He cried, **He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** Rivers without end, flowing, flowing. You know, we've been listening to the Word that has been coming to us corporately as a people, and we should never forsake that corporate Word. It's essential for the church.

Over the July conference in Mahomet, Illinois, the word came about Ezekiel's temple and the guards at the gate. The first is love. Love! God's love. Back in March of this year, God put it in our hearts to invite the ministry to our fellowship; Brother duCille came and ministered to us five messages. One was on faith. The second one was on the love of God, do you remember? He talked about God's love as being the cement or the glue that holds the church together. Now, I believe God is bringing this Word again this morning to continue to unite us in order for us to have His love amongst one, as well as one for another. We must love God with all of our heart, with all of our mind, with all of our soul, and all of our strength. It removes the barriers. It removes the darkness in which the enemy is able to move and whereby he can divide and bring destruction to us.

When my heart is open with God, any wrong thought that comes up before me against my brother will not be able to take root because God will be standing in the place where sin wants to stand. While our hearts are open to

God, God speaks to us if we are not right concerning our brother. The Spirit of God confronts us with His Word, ***Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*** (Matthew 5:23). So as we move toward God, we open ourselves up to the love of God. That is how God begins to move us into a higher realm, because, if we see something in an individual, God is revealing it that you might pray. Some things that God shows the church are pretty tough, you understand. There are deep sins in the church that God reveals to part of the church in order that they might move in prayer or in prophecy to see that person delivered. If God shows you something about an individual, that means there has to be a love within you for that person. If there is not a love, be careful. Be careful! Because it will taint whatever you hear and you will be deceived in thinking that you have heard from God when in actually, you will have heard from the devil. That's why our communication with God is a two-way street. It's a two-way street. Hallelujah! My God, hallelujah!

That's how much God loves us, brethren. We can be loving God, minding our own business, and all of a sudden, God knocks at your door and starts showing you things. Oh God! What am I to do with it?

Pray. Seek the face of the Lord. God will tell you if you need to do more. Pray, let the church pray. Do what it is according to the Word of the Lord. This is for the edification of the church.

Now, remember, in I Corinthians 14 Paul laid down the foundation of what prophecy is. He said it is for edification, exhortation, and comfort (verse 3). Now, prophecy isn't all sort of goody, goody, you understand, because I've seen where the Word of the Lord comes and is straight forward concerning an individual's state of being. When it is of the Spirit of God, you understand, the design of God is to bring a person to repentance. Sometimes an individual will not listen to God, and if they continue to resist God more and more, God has to use a more severe way to get his attention. Let me give you the example. Jimmy Swaggart, the television evangelist, had a problem. And, of course, many of us never knew the whole story until we heard one day on the news that Jimmy Swaggart had fallen in sexual sin. It sent reverberations everywhere. It was very interesting that, years later, we heard that even some brethren that we knew had gone to this man. God was speaking to the church about the problems of the brother and yet the man wouldn't listen.

So what did God have to do? First, the man did not repent for what he was secretly doing. God then had to speak to the church and the church went one by one. Now, remember the order of God - first you go to that brother and, if he does not hear, then bring another brother with you. God works that way. God has an order and a plan and a fashion. God does not want to expose any

of His children, especially to the world. But if a person or an individual refuses that correction and continues to refuse it, he's moving on a downward spiral and the only thing that God can do is to erect a large STOP sign in order to save that person. Bam! And everything that was of Swaggart's ministry that was sin against God, God had to expose it. God doesn't want to expose you to the world unless there is no other way. This is the mercy and love of God.

It should bring a fear in us, you know, that this is the timeframe of God in dealing with the church. Let Him deal with us! I'd rather deal with God in private to bring me to repentance than for my sin to be exposed before all the church in order for me to repent. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's a shameful thing to come to that point. I heard a message shared a couple of years ago which Brother Peter Schneider had shared from Luke 8:17, ***For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.*** And he asked God, "I wonder; who will be shouting my sins?" God spoke to him that it would not be others making it known, but that he would be shouting his own sins. Numbers 32:23 says, ***But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*** Unrepentant sin will find you out, and it's a terrible thing when it has to be exposed before all.

I don't know why I'm sharing all this. Maybe it will be a blessing to you; maybe it might mean something. I know, for myself, personally, I would want to know the fear of the Lord in all things and to allow God to deal with the weaknesses. What may seem small today can become very big in the coming days and it can be the very thing that will take your own heart away from God.

Solomon was that way. His sin started out small, but it continued to add and add and add. Think of that time when Solomon built the house of the Lord, and dedicated it to the Lord. Remember how the fire came down? There was only one other time before Solomon where the fire came down and showed God's approval and that was Moses' tabernacle. And here was this man that had such a right heart at the beginning, but in the end, his weakness towards women led to many wives and they turned his heart to serve after other gods. Other gods! Hallelujah! Where could we be like that, Lord? Well, if we do not take heed to the Word of God. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, ***Wherfore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.***

Brethren, let us be a fasting people. Some of us may not have fasted for awhile. We really need to fast. Because if we don't really do business in our hearts, the thing which is in us that is not of God will overtake us. Hallelujah! I believe in the love of God today, that God wants to exhort us. If we want to be

the people of God, if we want to be of that firstfruits company, we must have a heart totally after God. If we want to love our brethren with the love of God, the love of God must be in us. We must freely open up and let God walk up and down in us, and then He can say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant (Matthew 25:21,23)." You don't think that when we have a relationship with God that God isn't looking in our hearts and wanting to pinpoint something? This is God's business.

Don't be so worried about what is going to happen in the coming year with your jobs, with your houses, where you're going to be, what you're going to do, what's going to happen in the earth. There are all sorts of things going on. Our concern is to be in communion with God, to get this temple clean so that we are ready. I can worry and have all the knowledge of what's going to take place, have it all figured out, and yet, when the midnight hour comes, I could find myself without the oil in my vessel. Not having the Holy Ghost in my mind, not having the Holy Ghost in my desires, not having the Holy Ghost in my emotions, and not having the Holy Ghost in my will. Hallelujah!

How do we know the will? Let some weakness or some desire come upon us and how quick do we give in? How strong is your will? Hallelujah! Glory to God! It is a serious time that we are in and it takes more than just coming in and singing praise and worship and hearing a Word and going out. It's getting down to business with God and seeking the presence of God. It says that those that seek Me early, find Me (Proverbs 8:17).

The scripture says that the eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout all the earth that He might find such a one whose heart is completely His (II Chronicles 16:9). God's eyes are upon us right now, brethren. God's eyes are upon us as we go to sleep at night. God's eyes are upon us as we wake in the morning. God's eyes are upon every thought that we're thinking. Shouldn't we be thinking, "God, I love You. I want to serve You. God, forgive me. God, help me today that I won't be like George Herrig. I don't want to be like my humanity or my desires. I don't want to be like my family, what their desires and their wants are. I want to be like You. God, cover me. I can't trust in myself. I can only trust in You, God. Hallelujah! Only trust in You!"

II Chronicles 16:9 says, ***For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*** Amen. To show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him. Well, we started to read in the scripture about what is the greatest commandment. Is it to love the Lord with part of your heart, part of your soul? No, no, no, no! I got it wrong. It is to love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all of thy soul, with all of thy mind, and with all of thy strength. My goodness, brethren, let us serve God with fear and love. Let us serve Him with all of our hearts. Let us serve Him with all of our mind, all of our thinking.

God, forgive us of every wrong thought that has entered this temple. God, forgive us for every evil thought against our brethren, against any individual. Oh God, oh God, oh God. Oh God, with all of our soul. Oh, God, let us not go after false idols. God, they take their forms in many things. In America, it's mostly merchandise and wealth and possessions, titles, lands, and positions. But God, You're checking the hearts of all of your people in this hour to see what we will do when we're presented with that. Will we seek You, God? Will we search You? Will we esteem You higher than all the things of the earth? Let us love the Lord with all of our heart.

We sang the song earlier, but I wonder if we should sing it again, "Awaken My Heart." I know, brethren, as I heard this morning, I want my heart awakened. I want it freely flowing to know His love and to love Him in return. Not only to know His love, but to experience the depths of God and what it's like to love Him in return. It's beyond humanity. It's in the place of divinity. Do you remember what God said when Jesus began His ministry? He said, "Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Hallelujah! I think God also said that at the transfiguration. Didn't He say that at the beginning of His ministry? Yes, I thought so. But I do know that God wants to say the same things of us. Hallelujah! Praise God!

