

Nehemiah—The God of My Life

Psalm 42:8: “The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me.” But this is the part that struck me: “The prayer to the God of my life.”

“The God of my life” has really stuck in my craw, like a little bur when you go out walking and instead of getting ticks you get burs that stick to your socks, and if it gets in your shoe you are aware of it all the time because it is irritating. I am not saying this has been irritating; but it has been attention getting. So even though I am not going to be talking about this psalm, it is this verse that says, “The God of my life,” which has really been on my heart. And as I share today the focus is seeing that He is the God of my life.

Let’s pray:

Oh Lord, You are God, You alone are God; only You are God, and we worship You. We thank You, Lord, for this morning and how we had our hearts refreshed just by knowing that You have such a great love for us that You brought us to Yourself. And Lord, we thank You for the price You paid for us, but most of all we thank You that we are here now before You and without blame, and without sin, and we can be right here in Your presence without You being angry at us. Now we come before You and say, “Lord, we want to hear You, we want to hear what You want to speak into our lives today. Lord, it is Your Holy Spirit that we want to speak to us, and we would ask that You will use Your Word to speak into our lives. And we ask this in Jesus ’name. Amen.

The Picture

What I want to do this morning is paint a picture. Now I do not have the equipment here, but there are three parts to the picture that I want to bring up. There is a background, there is a foreground, and there are some details. All good works of art have some type of background in it. Even the Mona Lisa has a background to it. You have the winding road and trees, and it is not because the artist had extra paint and wondered what to with it, so he painted a background. No, the background is part of the painting. It was in the artist’s mind when he was going to paint. Then there is the foreground which is the main thing that is in the picture, and within the foreground and even in the background there are details which strike us which give us sometimes an insight into where the mind of the artist is. We see these little details in the painting.

We have been studying Ezra and Nehemiah on the alternate Friday nights, and I want to take out of that. So I am going to give you a background of this and then I am going to give you the foreground.

So the background is this. When we started Ezra and Nehemiah, we started out with the reality that it was their fault. It was due to their unfaithfulness. They were unfaithful to the God who redeemed them, and they fell into idolatry. With that idolatry came immoral lifestyles. Their character was affected negatively. These people who were supposed to be the people of God, you could not tell them from the nations around the world. They were worshipping idols, they were doing things that everyone else was doing. They were no different than the people of the land. So the Lord had to discipline them, and in disciplining them, He sent them away to Babylon. They were there seventy years under the discipline of the Lord.

The Exiles are Brought Back to Recover

After those seventy years, the Lord brought them back from their exile. And He had told them He was going to bring them back. He said, "I am sending you there, but I am going to bring you back. But things have to be fixed before I bring you back." So He brought them back from exile, but He did not just bring them back for the sake of bringing them back or even for the sake of saying, "You know, I said that I was going to bring you back, so I guess I have to bring you back because I am God and I do not lie." He had a purpose for bringing them back. His purpose in mind was (and I hate to use some of these words because we have spiritualized and religiosized some of these words so that they lose their meaning, but I cannot find other words.) God wanted to recover what had been lost. In other words, it is not that He wanted to fix it; He wanted to have it back. He wanted to have back what was supposed to be. And the thing that He wanted back was His testimony. In other words, He wanted a witness of who He was in the land. And the thing was that these people were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles of who He was, but they were not. And so when He put them out, the light had gone out so to speak. Now He said, "I want to restore that light. I want to put that light back in the place where it is supposed to be."

So when He brought the exiles back, it was to that purpose. It was not just that He was fulfilling His promise; He had a purpose. And what I really liked about one of the things of the conference was when David Peng put up that timeline. When we look at timelines, they have stuff up here and down here, you have all these things going up and down, but the timeline is straight; it never fluctuates, and that is the whole idea with God. God does not change. He keeps constant in what He wants. This testimony that He wanted from the beginning when He called Abram to begin the nation of Israel has not changed. And that was the wonderful thing I really got out of David Peng's message. You have all these failures, but God is the same; He does not change at all. It is like His voice goes evenly all the way through.

Now when I say He wants to restore His testimony, I do not mean He wants to bring back the glory days. "Oh, I wish it were back in the time of Moses. Oh, those were the days! Oh, when David was king, a man after God's own heart, oh, to go back to that again." No, He does not want to bring back the glory days; He wants to go forward, and this is the thing about the Lord. Even when we mess up in our own lives, and we fall away from the Lord or we fall into sin or whatever it is, the Lord never says, "I want to take you back." When we get to that point where we repent and we get right with the Lord again, the Lord goes forward from there. We are not going back to the way it was because it is never going to be the way it was. And as Christians we need to understand that we do not live in the past; the past is gone. You can never have it back; you can never make it up. There are no do-overs, but there is always a going forward because God always goes forward. He does not go back; He goes forward. The only time we ever look back is like today when we remember the Lord for what He has done. We look back, and we say, "Oh Lord, thank You. This is where I get my feet established in what You have done. Now I can go forward." We are not just to stay in one place. We are not supposed to have a static relationship with God where we just do not move anywhere. Like in Deuteronomy where it says, "You have circled the mountain long enough; go north. It is time to move." With the Lord it is time to move. So the Lord got the people to move; the Spirit of the Lord moved among the people, and even though

there was not a great number of people who went back, there was a number of people who went back.

When the exiles went back, they were dealt with. When they went back, this is what they were supposed to do. They went back for the purpose of reestablishing the altar, and the first thing they did was to rebuild the altar. We could say they rebuilt our way to God through the altar, the blood sacrifices that dealt with our sin. That is in Ezra chapter 3, and in Ezra chapter 3-6 they rebuilt the temple.

In Nehemiah chapters 1-7 they rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem, the city of the great King. Another thing that happened when the exiles went back was to reestablish and renew the priesthood because the priesthood was not used in exile for there was no temple. Therefore, they did not need it. But when they were going back to reestablish the worship of the Lord, they had to reestablish the priesthood. But it was not just the priesthood, they also had to restore the functions of the priesthood, what the priests did. You find that in Zachariah chapter 3, Ezra chapter 6, and Nehemiah chapter 8.

The Opposition

They also met opposition, and the opposition stopped the building of the temple, as we find in Ezra chapter 4. Because they stopped the building another thing that happened that was opposed to what God was trying to do, it made the exiles complacent as to their purpose. "Now is not the time to do this building. We will just kick back, and when God makes the waters stop, makes the storm stop, then we can continue building, but until that time, "Oh, it is too rocky out there so we will just live for ourselves."

There was opposition that made them fear to work on the wall. It made them afraid. "If you continue building the wall, we are going to come and get you. You had better be watching it because we are coming after you. You will not know when it is going to happen, but we are going to be there; we are going to get you." "Oh, we cannot go up there."

In all of these things that were opposition, God had a counter play to it. You might say, "Well, that is good defense." No, it is good offense to go after your enemy.

So the first thing He did was to send prophets. He sent Haggai who was an older prophet, with a message. First of all, he admonished them. What does admonish mean? It means he gave them a good swift kick in the pants, and said, "Get off your duffs, and go about doing what the Lord called you to go back to do. It is time to get up and start doing those things. So He instructed them in things to do. Go get the wood and bring it down. Then he encouraged them. Now let's get on with the building.

Then they had another prophet, Zechariah, who was a young man and a visionary. He talked about the things of the future, the things God was going to do. God is going to do all these things, and what he did through these prophecies (which were visions that he had) was give people hope and a future. Sometimes we are just so looking and honed in on the days that we live in that we do not look up. Here he is saying, "You guys need to look up. Don't think about the decree of this king or that king. Don't think about these other things; look up. That is where your hope is. God

has a future for us. Just like when you were in exile and Jeremiah sent you that letter which said, 'Go ahead and build the temple.' There is a hope for you; there is a hope in the future." So when he came, he gave hope.

Then he sent Ezra who was a scribe and a priest. In the end of Ezra, he dealt with mixture: intermarriage and things like that. We find in the Bible reading programs it is easy to read things like the histories; it is easy to read Genesis. It is easy to read the first twenty chapters of Exodus, and then you get into the building of the ark and other things that kind of weighs you down. It is tough to read Leviticus. In Numbers you find all these peoples and tribes. Then you get past that and get to the spies, and you roll it. Kings, Samuel, Judges are easy to read. Epistles are a tough read.

But you can thank Ezra for I Chronicles chapters 1-6 because one of the things that happened during the captivity was that the priesthood was lost. As a scribe and also a priest, he wrote those genealogies to make sure the priesthood would be pure, and he also made sure that the Messianic line was intact. So these were important things that he was doing even though he may have said, "This is so tedious and boring." But this was a God-save for what God was doing. So Ezra did those things.

Then he sent Nehemiah of whom we cannot say that he was in a great position where he was except for being the cup bearer to the king. But he was a leader, and God sent a leader to do something that the people needed. He got the people to follow him in rebuilding the wall which was finally finished in Nehemiah chapter 6. So why doesn't Nehemiah end there? Because this is just background. So the background behind all of this was all these things which God had done. So what is the foreground? That is what we want to look at now.

The Foreground

The foreground is how all these things had happened—the opposition, the sending of prophets, the rebuilding of these things. What effect did it have on the remnant, on the returned exiles? So to see the effect we need to go into Nehemiah chapter 8.

Nehemiah 8:1: "When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities."

The building of the wall was finished in the sixth month, the twenty-fifth day. The Hebrew calendar is a Lunar calendar, and that is about a thirty-day month, somewhere between twenty-nine and thirty. (You should study lunar calendars, they are really interesting. When does the New Moon start? That's really fascinating. But that is an aside.) The seventh month came, and this is the first day of the seventh month, so that could have been four or five days. So four or five days had passed.

"When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities. Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate, and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday before the men, women

and those who could understand. The ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

V. 7: “Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkuh, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law (or gave sense to the Law); and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.”

After they had initiated again the Feast of Tabernacles, they are celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, and it says:

V. 8:18-9-3: “Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner. Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God.”

So here in the foreground are the people, not a prophet, not Nehemiah, not even Ezra, the people called for the Book of the Law to be read. Of all the things they could have read, (read Psalms) why the Book of the Law? It says that they went to the Book of the Law three times in these passages. At the beginning of chapter 8, at the end of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9, so this must be something really, really important because the Lord has drawn our attention to this right here in these few verses.

When we look at this, we cannot look at how they looked at the Law because first of all, they did not look at the Law before Christ came with New Testament eyes. When we look at the way Israel would look at the Law, it would be first of all to them a revelation of who God was. When God gave them the Law at the beginning, in Exodus 20 the first thing it says is, “I am the Lord that brought you out of Egypt. This is a revelation, this is who is talking to you as I give the Law. I am the very One that took you out of bondage in Egypt.” You can also look at it this way, He had to be a great God because He judged the gods in Egypt. If you go through some of the things that plagued them, they were against the gods of Egypt and He was saying, “I am greater than these gods, and I can snatch My people away from them because you are not as powerful as I am.”

“And you shall have no other god. There is no other god like Me.” As He gives the Law, what He is saying is, “You can see by the things that I am giving you in this Law, that I am different from any other god.” And in that way we can say that is one way you can look at what holiness is. “I am not like all these other things. I stand outside of them; I stand alone. They do not even match Me; I am holy.”

As we go into Leviticus which I said is a tough read because it has all these offerings, but when you look at all those offerings, what is God saying to these people? He is saying, “I am not like these other gods. Look at what these other gods are asking you to do: “Sacrifice your children to me.” “I do not ask you to do that.” “Give me some sensual type of worship that corrupts who

you are as a man.” “I do not ask that. I am different; I am holy, and because I am holy I want you as My people to be holy. And that is one of the reasons why I give you these things. I redeemed you to be My people who are different from the peoples in the land into which you are going. I am Holy.” So this is a revelation of God. Another thing about the Law, we can look at what Old Testament writers wrote about the Law.

Restoring the Soul

In Psalm 19:7-10: “The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting (restoring) the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: (it is eternal) the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

And even Paul the apostle, drawing from his background as a Jew, said in Romans 7:22: “I delight in the law of the Lord according to the inward man.” In other words, when the Jews looked at this, they looked at this as, “this is something that converts the soul.” Let me dwell on that for a minute: “Converts or restores the soul.” In creation we have been made body, soul and spirit. The soul in us has to do with our intellect, our emotions, and our will. So when the Psalmist was writing about the Law he was saying that it converts the soul. When we fell, who rules the soul? It is ourself. What does it mean by convert or restore? The actual Hebrew word for convert in this means to turn back, to turn back to. So what is happening with the Law as far as these people are concerned? What is the Law doing for them? It was turning their souls back to God. It was turning them back and changing them. Instead of saying, “I want this and I want that,” it was changing them until their intellect was saying, “I want to know what You have to say. I want to know, not in an informational way; I want to know because as I look at these things, they are right, these things are true, they are to be desired, therefore I want to know.”

Our emotions are happy, sad, up and down. But their emotions were saying, “You know what makes me happy? It makes me happy to please You.” When our little kids were growing up, and we heard, “Daddy, I just want to please you,” it was wonderful to hear. But here man’s soul sees these things and says, “I want to please You. I see what You have done for me, and I say, How can I give back to You? I want to please You in return.”

Then the will is saying, “I want to do what You show me is right. I want to do those things.” So that’s what the reading of the Law meant to these people, this is what it was saying. It was turning them back and saying, “Oh God, I want what You want for me.” It was not, “I want to obey.” But it was, “I want the things that You want for me.” That makes it a lot different than saying, “Well, you better knuckle down under it,” doesn’t it? When you begin to see that the things that God wants for you are good, then you begin to say, “Lord, I want the good.”

Therefore, the calling for the Book of the Law to be read was as if the people were saying, “Lord, in the light of all that we have seen You do, (back to the background) You brought us back from exile, You rebuilt the temple, You have rebuilt the walls of the city, and we are safe. In light of all these things, we see because of You doing them, we truly see that we are Your people. Who

else could we be because You have done all these things? We have to be Your people. And because we see that we are Your people, we want to live our lives in a way that testifies that we are Your people. We want to live lives that glorify You. We want to live lives that mark us out as Yours. It is not enough that we have the temple rebuilt, it is not enough that the walls are rebuilt. That is all great and good, but Lord, what good are those things if You do not have a people who want to be Yours? We want to be that people.”

And so this is in the foreground that God now has a people who are saying to Him, “Oh God, we want to be Your people. Show us how to live.” There is a great book written in 1976 by Francis Schaeffer. He was a theologian philosopher who lived in my time, and in 1976 he wrote a book called, “How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture.”

Here we have these people who have come back as exiles, in a land under Persian rule. They are in mixed categories; it was not just Israelites there. And they were saying, “God, we want to live for You. Show us how.” This is in the forefront. This is what God was doing. He was not just out there to build the temple. He was not just out there to build the walls. He was doing it in order to have a people who will follow Him. Otherwise, if you just have the building of those things, you just have an empty worship. But He is saying, “I want a people.” And they have come to the point of saying, “We see all that You are doing, and we see that You have called us to be Your people, and we are just telling You back, ‘We want to be Your people’, but You have to show us how to live like Your people because that is what is needed.”

The Details

Now to the details. We have the reappearance of Ezra. Ezra is never mentioned in the book of Nehemiah until chapter 8. He disappeared from the end of Ezra chapter 10 to this point, and we do not see him anymore.

What do we know about Ezra? First of all, it says that he was a scribe and a priest. What is a scribe? Barb and I and my kids went to the Bible Museum one day a few years ago. I was thinking this was probably going to be hokey. We got in on the third floor, and they had an exhibit about how the Bible has been kept going through all the years, and how you could tell that the Scripture was not messed with. People just do not write into it and things like that. And the way that the Jews copied the Scriptures is fascinating, and if you go there, that is the part you want to see. You want to go there and see how they did these things, how they were so minute. I do not know if you all have ever seen Hebrew writing, but if you check out some Hebrew writing, maybe in a Strong’s Concordance or a Vine’s Dictionary and look up the Hebrew writings, they have all these little jots and tittles. And you remember where Jesus said, “Not one jot or tittle of the Law (Matthew 5:18).” But you have all these little things, and these men were copying, and they had to be exact. And if they were not exact, they had to get rid of the whole thing and start over. That is how meticulous these things were.

Now a scribe was not only a copier, but as he is copying he is reading what he copies. One of the things that I have been trying lately is changing my study habits. When I study for a Bible study or something like that, I have begun to copy the section that we are going to read. I write it out on paper, and sometimes I write it out more than once. I write it in different versions. But

the more you are doing that, you are connecting with what you are reading. You are not just fast-forwarding. You are connecting everything. “Oh, is this the right word, let me go back.” Then as you are reading, you are going, “Oh wow, this is different, and you underline it, and all of a sudden you are getting more understanding about what you are reading. Or you are getting questions: “Why is he saying it this way?” So you are doing all these things, and Ezra did that. As a matter of fact I read in a Jewish library that Ezra is responsible for bringing the Law back to Jerusalem because he was a scribe. He brought back copies of the Law. But not only was he a copier, he was a teacher of the Law.

That is what we have in the New Testament with the scribes who said that they sit in the seat of Moses. Why? Because not only did they copy the Word and read the Word, they taught the people what is in the Law. They gave you the interpretation. And it says in Ezra, “It was on his heart that he would not only teach the Law, but he would do the Law.” And that is a wonderful thing because he is saying, “I do not want to teach things; I want to have the things that I am teaching affect me, and I want them to affect me first. I want them to have their effect on me first so that when I am teaching it, I know the power and the holiness that is in this Word because it is having an effect on my life.” So that is what we find Ezra doing. Ezra means ‘help,’ and some people say that Ezra is a shortened version of Azaryahu. And that means, (you notice the “yahu” there. It does not mean the University of Virginia fans), it means ‘God,’ so it means ‘God helps.’

They called for Ezra to read, and Ezra then goes about, and it says, “He is a ready scribe.” He has been sitting there, I do not know how many years between Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 8, but he had been sitting in the background for all these years and now comes the moment that he is really, really used. He comes up. God always has the right man at the right time. And here He has Ezra as that ready scribe. He is ready. This is a great picture of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a ready Scribe for us. He takes the Word and He gives sense to it. He makes it ready when we need it. “Lord, I do not know what this means. Help me with this.” The Holy Spirit is right there. “Here I am; I am ready.”

Then it says that he had all these other Levites who were teaching this. Some people think that Ezra had a little school of scribes in Jerusalem, that he came back and he started to teach other people not just the trade, but the vocation of being a scribe. “I want you to come and read the Word with me. Let’s copy the Word together. Let’s talk about it.” He was a mentor. He disciplined these guys so that they, in this time when this was needed, because there were a whole crowd of people, and they did not have these little microphones here to help them. So there was this whole crowd of people, and the Levites were going out, and it says, “They gave sense to the Word.” And the idea is that they expounded; they gave an explanation of the words as they were being read to the people. They explained what the Word was saying, what it meant. And then with the explanation probably there was an application. “And this is how it applies to us. This is what it is saying to us.”

So here we have this little detail of the idea that Ezra the scribe is there, and that there are other brothers who are ready to come in and help. That is our little detail.

This is the whole thing of what God is doing. And if we do not see what is in the forefront, all the stuff in the background does not mean anything because not only does the background give

meaning to the foreground but the foreground gives meaning to the background. And here we find that the Lord has a people. All that background leads to this, that God now has Himself a people who want to live for Him, who are saying, “We want to be Your people.” So these other things are not the end. The buildings and the other things they did are not the end. The end that God is after is that He finally has a people for Himself. The temple and other things are shadows. The temple is really the church. And what is the church? It is the people; it is those ones of God who are saying, “We are Your people. We want to be Your people.”

How Do We Live?

The other thing is that you have a people who are saying, “We do not know everything. We have had the prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah. We have all these things, but the one thing we do not know is ‘How do we live? Lord, show us how to live, how we are supposed to live as Your people.’”

Then you have as a result of this at the end of chapter 9 which is a long but beautiful prayer, where they say, “We are like our fathers,” but they come to the end and they are going to make a covenant with God. We think, “Oh, they are making a covenant.” But you need to put it back in that era and what they say is, “We want to be Your people.” So there is a new dedication to God—not to the temple, “The temple the Lord, the temple of the Lord; the Lord will not destroy the temple of the Lord.” Oh yeah, because I do not have a people, I will to show you that I want a people.” So there is a new dedication to Him.

Then if you go on to chapter 11, you find that they begin to repopulate the city. In other words, out of this, part of the living, is being brought together, brought back into the city where God is. He said, “This is where My Name is, and I want to bring you back in. So there are people saying, “Okay Lord, I want to go back; I want to live in the city as Your people.”

In chapter 13 after the dedication of the wall, there was a separation of the people who had married Gentile wives and had Gentile children. All of a sudden, there was a cutting it off because the people asked, “How do I live, Lord?” He said, “You know, the ways of the world are not for you. The thinking of the world is not for you.”

That is why I thought what Dana said was really, really important, the idea of: what is at the center of a Christian view of life? It is not that we have freedom of religion in the United States. It is not that there is no abortion in the United States. The center is that Christ is coming back and soon; that is the center. And here it is saying that what the world thinks, this is how we should be governed. And it has filtered into Christianity, and that is why people blaspheme God because they say, “Every Christian is a hard right-wing bigot.” It is because we have mixed politics with religion. We mixed it, and the Lord says, “I am not for that.” It is like when Joshua said, “Are You for us or against us?” The Lord is not for the United States; the Lord is for His kingdom. That is the thing that counts. And if you want to be in His kingdom there are things that the Lord will show you: “This needs to be tweaked, this needs to be done away with, you need to get away from this, you need to embrace this.” And this is the whole idea about coming to the Lord and saying, “Lord, I do not know how to live. Show me.” And He says, “Okay, you come to the place where I dwell.” You know, God dwells here. He dwells in His Word. But then again He gives us a

ready scribe, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the One who takes the Word and gives us light to what it means. He is the One who writes it on our hearts. This is what the Lord is after. And in these last days, isn't that what the testimony of the Lord really is, that He has a people who can be seen as His people, that do not bow down to other gods, who live in accordance with His will? Isn't that what the Lord is really after in this world? Isn't that what His kingdom is?

So brothers and sisters, as the whole painting comes together, everything in it is relevant. Especially relevant is what is in the foreground, and the foreground is that God wants a people who want to be His people and are saying, "Show me how to be that people," because that right there illuminates the whole background. It shows you why these things are.

So brothers and sisters, with these things in mind then, the question is, "How should we then live?" And that is a question of us just saying, "Lord, I do not know. Show me, please." It is not like demanding, but humbly asking the Lord, "Show me for my own life, show me, because I want to glorify You. I want You to be the One who people see. And Lord, I do not want to be like my fathers who left You and went into idolatry. I want to be that new person. I want to be that new creation that You meant me to be in Christ."

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that You have a great work. It was not Nehemiah who just said, "I am involved in a great work," or "I am doing a great work," but it is You who are saying, "I am doing a great work, and I will not come down." Lord, that is why we know that You speak to us. You are not coming down because You have a work that You are doing, and You have a work to make us Your people. And we want to bow to You; we want to go with You. You are making us Your people. As individuals we want to be Your person; we want to be Your people as a group. We want to have the testimony that Christ lives in me and can be seen. Oh Lord, we do not want just some kind of morality. We want the very life that portrays You, that is Yours. So Lord, we call upon You now and say, "Here we are." Mary said, "Be it done as You wish." Lord, that is what we say, "Let Your will be done in us." In Jesus 'name. Amen.