

The Upper Spring and The Lower Spring

II Timothy 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, and I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Joshua 15:13-19: "Now he, Joshua, gave Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the sons of Judah, according to the command of the Lord to Joshua, namely, Kiriath-arba, Arba being the father of Anak (that is Hebron). Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the children of Anak. Then he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. And Caleb said, 'The one who attacks Kiriath-Sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as a wife.' Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; so he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife. It came about that when she came to him, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she alighted from the donkey, and Caleb said to her, 'What do you want?' Then she said, 'Give me a blessing; since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.' So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs."

I Corinthians 15:10: "Paul says, but by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain."

Ephesians 2:4: "But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Let's pray:

Our Father, we have turned our eyes this morning to Your Son and saw Him, reveling in who He is for us, that He is the One who came down and took away our sins, and now we just want to turn our eyes again to Him. I want to turn our eyes to You, Lord, and ask that You would by Your Holy Spirit open Your Word to us and speak to us in a way that will encourage us to walk with You. Lord, we pray for You doing this for us, just like Achsah, we come before You and say, "Give me a spring, give me water." So, Lord, we come to You this morning, saying, "Give to us a blessing." We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

The last time I spoke on this verse from II Timothy Jerry had brought a word about, "I finished the course." And I want to look at it as the course of our life. I have finished the course; what the Lord has given me I have finished. It says about David that he served the purpose of the Lord in his generation. And Jerry was talking about us being all in, and I remember I said, "For me that is a hard thing because when I look at being all in, it is like New Year resolutions. I can resolve all I want, but my resolve does not last very long. I think I made it four months once with one resolution, and that is pretty good."

God Moves in Our Circumstances

When I was looking at it, I said, "Lord, where is my hope? I do not have the resolve to do these things. So, the last time I brought a message on "Finishing the Course," it had to do with maybe I cannot be all in. Maybe I want to be all in, and I am trying to be all in, but I fail at it. But God is all in because of what we celebrated here this morning at the table. He sent His Son to die for us, not just so we could be forgiven. He has a purpose for us that He wants completed, and He is working that purpose in us.

Jacob is an example of how we may stray and go off the road and fall by the wayside. But we see how God intervened in Jacob's life and took him back up and brought him back to Bethel and sent him back and said, no, no, no, Jacob, remember you are mine. You are no longer Jacob, I called you Israel, and the rest of that is how God's intervention was used in the circumstances of Jacob's life, not just bringing him into circumstances. Sometimes I think, we think, oh God is doing this. No, God is letting the circumstances of life happen, but He uses them. That is providence, that is God moving in our circumstances.

Our Help Comes from God

Today, I want to look at a different facet. It is not just that God intervenes in our life, but that God provides what is needed for us to come to the place where we finish the course, not the race, the course set before us. It is not even set before us, the course that we are in has an end. That is a wonderful thing, it has an end to be achieved.

My New American Standard says, "He gave her land in the Negev" which is the desert. Think about that, this is the inheritance of God, but it is in the Negev. Now the real provision and our inheritance is that we find these springs, or we are given these springs. I look at it this way; when we look for substance as Christians, many times it is in the wrong places. But Achsah did the right thing; she went beyond herself to another to find this. That is not what I do. If I am in a desert, what do I do? Well, I am going to start digging for water, and so I just dig deeper and deeper and deeper. You know when we are trying to find within ourselves the thing that will complete what God has begun, we are in trouble. We are in deep trouble because we are never going to find it. We might find a little trickle of water here and there, but it dries up quickly.

So here we are just saying, "Where do I go?" And Achsah did the right thing; she went to another. It is like Psalm 121 where it talks about going up to Jerusalem, "A Song of Ascents," and it says, "I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where does my help come from?" And how many times I have looked into myself and said, "Where is the help?" And how wonderful it is when we get to that place, and it is always in desperation when we say, "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." I must go outside of myself; I must go to another to find everything I need to be completed, everything I need to have the purpose that God has made me for completed. And that is not a bad thing. It does not make us failures because it is going to make us overcomers because that is how we overcome ourselves, by looking to another.

Grace

So, you can see that these springs have to do with grace; therefore, we are going to be looking at grace. I remember the first time I spoke here back in 1998. I shared the time with Roger Ogburn, both doing a half hour. He spoke first and I spoke second, and I spoke on grace. Afterwards people would come up and say, "Oh, good words," and things like that. One sister, who is not here right now, came up to me and said, "Of course, it was good, you spoke on grace. What is not good about grace?" That burst my balloon.

I want to talk about this grace, and when we talk about grace, I do not want to give a definition and say this is grace and such, but there will be some things that define grace. I want to take these pictures of the upper and lower springs to illustrate a wonderful provision that God has made for us. Then I will seek to apply more fully to these two springs in the end. I will use two New Testaments passages concerning grace.

Grace is Given to Us from The Heavens

One of the verses is in I Corinthians, and that chapter centers on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is Paul's treatise on the resurrection of Christ. The other verses are out of Paul's words to the Ephesians, and Paul begins the letter of the Ephesians with us in the heavens. This is important because both things, resurrection and the heavens, are all about how grace is given to us; it is all from the heavens. I just want to say this, so many of us have an earthly Christianity because we are looking to ourselves to do what God has promised to do. The Lord is saying, "You will not find the answer on earth; the answer is in the heavens."

No Grace without Resurrection

I want to make this a point; let's consider the resurrection of the Lord Jesus for just a moment because it is the risen Lord we are to look to as Christians. When we look at the crucified Lord, we look back at what He has done for us. When we look to the Lord who is risen, we pray to the risen Lord. We do not pray to One who is dead; we pray to a living God. "I serve a risen Savior; He is in the world today."

You know, there is no grace without resurrection. You might say, "Well Jim, the Scripture says that Jesus was full of grace." If He never rose from the dead, the grace of our Lord would be in the grave with Him. It would have stopped right there. All you would have had was a Man who was gracious to others. So, without the resurrection there is no grace, and in chapter 15 Paul says in verse 17: "And if Christ had not been raised from the dead, your faith is worthless, and you are still in your sins." There is no saving you, or put it this way, there is no saving grace. There is none! Grace cannot save you apart from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It was grace that He went to the cross for you, but if He never rose, what good is that to you? The grace stops there. But thank God, on the third day He raised the Lord Jesus from the grave according to the Scriptures. Now that is important. It is according to the Scriptures. This is foretold. This was all the way through. "I have been doing this; I have been planning this all the way through, and now it has come to the fore." But that is just one part of the story because it is not enough that He just rose from the dead. If He had just risen from the dead and never ascended to heaven His work would not have been completed.

Jesus Christ Ascended into Heaven

Recently, we took my father-in-law to Noah's ark in Kentucky. It was fabulous to look at, but if Jesus never ascended into heaven, what are you going to do? Start up a theme park in Nazareth and everybody can visit Jesus. There is nothing to it because the power of resurrection does not just raise Him from the dead but has Him ascend into heaven. Because the ascension into heaven is what brings power to grace because it has given Him a place in the heavenlies. Having risen from the dead He ascended into the heavens, and there He has the ministry of a High Priest and a Mediator of the new covenant. And as High Priest He brings to God the blood of the atoning sacrifice, and as Mediator He brings the good of the new covenant into our lives. So, it is so important that we realize that not only is Christ risen from the dead, but He is also ascended into heaven.

Jesus Christ Secures for God His right to Open Heaven to Sinners

And to let you know about the importance of this priestly ministry, there is a symbol in the temple when Jesus was crucified. He cried out, "It is finished!" The veil in the temple was rent in two from top to bottom.

Hebrews 7:25 shows us that heaven is now open to all who would draw near to God through Jesus Christ. Not only can we be saved from sin, but we are saved to the uttermost. As High Priest, our Lord Jesus secures for us all the effectiveness of His atoning blood, and He secures for God His right to open heaven to sinners. He had to give God the right to do that. This sacrifice gave God the right to do this. That is why it is so important when you look at allegories. It is so good when C. S. Lewis wrote, "The Lion, the Rich and the Wardrobe," and they went to the stone table and said, "Okay, you have got to kill Aslan," and then they left Aslan for a time, and then there was a deeper magic. There was something greater that went beyond. There was a fulfilling of God's righteousness because sin demanded death, and once death was obtained, the gates of hell, the gates of death could be opened. It gave God the right to open those things because propitiation was made. Atonement was made; therefore, He now has the right, this Holy God, this righteous God has now the right, and everything that would be against us entering that holy place has now been taken away. There is nothing to stop us from entering in. The enemy has been taken away.

Jesus Christ Conveys All Heavenly Blessings While We Are on Earth

Ephesians begins in the heavenlies, and this is where the High Priest is. And there Paul talks about all the blessings. In Ephesians chapter 1 it says, "We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." A High Priest acts as Mediator for us to convey, to bring to us like a conveyor belt all these heavenly blessings while we are on earth. It is like Jacob's ladder, angels ascending and descending, coming down bringing all these blessings into our lives.

So, when we look at grace, we must know, we must see that in the heavenly action, the heavens have been opened. In seeing that the heavens have been opened for us, grace has heavenly origin and heavenly supply for us. Now not one ounce of grace is deserved. Nothing of what has been secured for us in the heavenlies and given to us is deserved or earned by something we have done or something we seek to do to earn it. Everything that is in the

heavenlies is out of our reach. All these things secured by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are unattainable by us, therefore grace is unmerited. It is totally the kindness of God who gives us these things that we walk into.

Also, there is a conveying from heaven to us on earth of the very gifts and blessings through the mediating of Jesus Christ our High Priest. And that enable us to live the Christian life, to live the Christ life in us.

Victory Has Been Won by His Death, Resurrection, Ascension

So, the victory has been won for us by His death and resurrection. Now every time I say death and resurrection, I am including the ascension, so if I do not say ascension, do not think I am leaving it out; I am just including it. There is a victory over sin and Satan by Christ dying. Christ was tempted to come off the cross, but He stayed on the cross, and He died. And by that death, He gained a victory over Satan and a victory over death by His resurrection because He dies no more. And by His victory we are sealed when He sits down in heaven. He sat down in heaven because everything was done. This is the crux of the matter here. What the Lord has done for us is truly marvelous, and I want to liken it to something.

Beachhead and Enlargement

What was the key point in World War II? In Europe it was the invasion of Normandy which had such an impact that within not even a year, within eleven months almost to the day, the war in Europe was over. It is an incredible thing. I want to liken what we have to this. The first thing in the invasion of Normandy that was established was a beachhead. And after a beachhead was established, there was an enlargement, and I want to talk about what those two things are.

A beachhead is when you make an assault on your enemy, and you are victorious. You undercut the foundation of his defenses so he cannot defend himself anymore, and he must back off that ground. So, when you see movies like Saving Private Ryan and Band of Brothers, you see the assault that happened. It was a great battle. When I say great, I do not mean it is far out. I mean it was great in its intensity. It was a great battle.

This is what Christ has done in His death and resurrection. He has made a beachhead, and the beachhead has been made in the heavenlies. Then once the beachhead was established, the next thing is they made an enlargement.

Now the enlargement is this. Once I cleared out the beaches, I cleared out the enemy from in front of me. Now I can start bringing in my supply trucks, my tanks, my artillery, all these kinds of things. Now I can start unloading the ships and bringing them in for the battles that will be ahead. And the whole thing is this, we see that in Saving Private Ryan when after they had taken the beach, you see them sitting down and you see all these trucks coming. Then I want to say what happened at either Gold or Sword Beach, which there was not a lot of fighting there but the enlargement came in there. And we want to look at that as the enlargement being the supply that comes from heaven, the supply that comes from heaven to us to walk on this earth as a Christian.

The Beachhead

Forgiveness of Sins

There is supply for us, but we must start first with a beachhead, and there are two songs of grace that I thought of. One is Hymn 805 in Christ In Song and this is a song that says, “Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder on Calvary’s mount out-poured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”

This song talks about the grace that takes away our sin, the grace that deals with our sin. We are saved by grace. So, when we look at this, this is the beachhead that we have been given. This is the place that we move out from in our lives. This has been established already. This is now established and from here we move out. But what we have here is a beachhead. In looking at the hymn that says, “It is greater than my sin. Let’s look at this beachhead and the battle that took place.

Ephesians 1:7: “In Him you have the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, so the first strike in this beachhead is over our sin. And Christ shed His blood and the High Priest takes the blood that He has shed and applies that blood to the mercy seat in heaven.

In Leviticus chapter 16, it talks about the atoning blood. It is not just that you killed the Lamb, then you took some of His blood inside to where the presence of God was and applied it before Him on the mercy seat. It is on the mercy seat because that blood was purchased for the forgiveness of sin by the mercy of God. God took pity on us because we were in such a condition, and that pity moved Him.

Charles Wesley wrote one of his hymns, “Five bleeding wounds He Bears, received on Calvary, the poor effectual prayers they strongly plead for me. Forgive them, oh forgive, they cry. Don’t let that ransomed sinner die.”

Reconciliation with God

You see, we have an Advocate with the Father. Now I want to change your idea of an advocate because generally we look at an advocate as being a lawyer, and the lawyer is using the law to acquit you. Or as W. C. Fields would say when he was caught reading the Bible, and they asked him what he was doing, he said, “I am looking for loopholes. There must be a loophole in there so I can get you off.” We do not have a lawyer; we have a Priest, and there is a big difference between a priest and a lawyer.

When you look at a high priest, what is he carrying on his heart? He carries the twelve tribes, and it is not just that he had the stones, but the name was written on each stone; He knows the names. And not only that, but on his shoulders, he had two stones, and on each stone, there was six names of the tribes of Israel. He bears us. Our Savior bears us before God, and He bears us on His heart because He cares for us. That is what it means when He bears us.

You know, when you are a mother or father, you bear with your kids. Why do you bear with them? Because you love them, and therefore you bear with them. You bear through the things

they are going through. Both of us as parents know how we have been borne through, how we have been before the Lord, we have gone into the holy place for our own kids because we love them. A priest loves, and here we have this priest who is presenting Himself on our behalf: "Forgive them, and it says that there are five bleeding wounds." That is what He shows His Father, and His Father cannot turn that away.

Brothers and sisters, there is more to grace than just the forgiveness of sin.

Ephesians 2:13 it says, "You who were far off were made near through the blood of Christ."

In other words, we are reconciled. I know when I have offended somebody, there is a wall that is between us." You can forgive and not remove the wall: "Yeah, I forgive you." But this forgiveness removes the wall. That is like with the prodigal's father who did not say, "Okay, become a servant." No, he reconciled him to himself. But there is more to this grace than just being reconciled, forgiven.

Familial Relationship with God

John 1:12: "But as many as received him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God."

So now it is not just being reconciled like friends; we are brought into a relationship. And it is not just the relationship of a friend; this is a familial relationship. That means when I enter this relationship with God, what does God become to me? He is not just God anymore. He is not that generic old man. He is now a Father because into our hearts comes the Spirit who cries out "Abba Father." What does that mean? It means that He cares for you. He cares for you, and He will provide you with all that you need to help you grow up. He will not put you off to the side. He will discipline you when He needs to; He will instruct you; He will encourage you. He will do all the things that fathers do to raise their children. And above all that, He loves you. He loves you as His child. There is nothing stronger than the love we have for a child. I love my wife, but I am finding out that I have strong ties to my kids, and these ties are so strong, I will not let them be broken. That is the love of a father.

Priests to God and Father

But that is not all because there is more to this grace than that. In Revelation 1:5-6 it says, "To Him who loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us a kingdom priests to His God and Father."

Now we have been brought into a purpose. It talks about being a priest. In other words, there is a purpose for us to fulfill in the kingdom of God, and it is not playing harps or any other musical instrument. There is a purpose, a vocation, a priest. In my Catholic upbringing a priest was one who brought God to you. Our vocation is to bring God to the earth. Our life is to bring Him to the place where we live, to the desert that I live in. That is where I am. I am light; I am salt. This is your vocation; you are the light of the earth, salt of the earth.

This is grace. All of this, all these things. This forgiveness of sins, this reconciliation, this being children of God, this having a vocation in the kingdom of God is the favor of God to us, and none

of it is deserved. But He has given it to us; He has conferred it on us in Christ. This is the beachhead; this is the place we live out from.

Application

Now one of my daughters will say, “Okay dad, now how do you apply this?” This is where you start every day. You start, “Here I am, your child. I am forgiven; I am in this place.” It is like Paul said, “I am what I am by the grace of God.” Let’s apply that to this: I am forgiven by the grace of God. Do you believe that? Stand on it. This is where we stand. This has been established for us. This is a heavenly reality, as Watchman Nee would say. You bank on it. You reckon it. This is truth, not my truth; it is God’s truth. I am now reconciled by the grace of God. I am a child of His by the grace of God. I have been brought to a vocation, to purpose by the grace of God. This is our starting point for each day to live out our life from this base. I want to live out my life, I want to start my life knowing that I am forgiven, knowing that I am His child. Knowing that He has a purpose for me. This is where I start my day. This is where I go out every day. This is meant for me. This is where I start. This is the relationship that is cemented in the heavenlies, and I start in the heavenlies every day. That is what it means for us to start in the heavenlies every day in the good of all these things.

The Enlargement

Now that the beachhead is established you must understand also, the beachhead being established, the enlargement is also established so that the grace that enables us to live in newness of life in this world as sons of the living God come down to us. Now I want to give you a picture because I think we look at grace in different ways. Sometimes it is just unmerited favor, but it is so much more than that. When you think of this being in the heavenlies and all this richness and things like this, we say, “Well, what is up in the heavenlies?”

In World War II when you are on the beaches of France, where do your supplies come from? The arsenal of democracy, which was the United States at that time. So, you have the United States at that time untouched on its mainland, and it has all this economic and industrial power, and all of that is funneled down to the men on the beach. All this magnificent power was coming to them, not all at once, in time of need.

Infinite Resources of God in Time of Need

It says in Hebrews 4:16, “We go to the Lord to receive grace in time of need.” And in time of need I need unmerited favor. No, I already have unmerited favor because I am forgiven, I am reconciled. I am His child. So, what does that mean? It means that the infinite resources of God come to me.

We Are at Our End

And this is the other hymn I chose by Annie Fling, Hymn 431 in Christ In Song: “He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater.” The second verse says, and this is the whole key because a lot of times God withholds His grace because of this. “When we reach the end of our horded resources.” We must come to an end of thinking we can do things. We must come to that end: “I just cannot do it; I cannot do this. Why can’t I do this?” He says, “Because you are not

supposed to; I can do it.” And when you come to that place where you can say, “Lord, I cannot do it anymore,” that is when His grace is restored to us.”

In Galatians it 5:4 says, “Why do you want to go back to being justified by the law? What are you doing? You have fallen from grace.” A lot of times you think falling from grace is like falling into some hideous sin. In God’s eyes, falling from grace is just saying, “I am trusting myself.” If you are going to trust yourself, the spigot of grace turns off as far supplying what you need. That grace for forgiveness of sins is always there. That is never turned off, brothers and sisters. And I hope you realize that. That grace for the forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation is never turned off. But the grace that supplies our need in time of trial can be turned off, and God will do it. But thank the Lord, He waits for us to come to that place, “I cannot do it.”

You remember when we talked about Jacob, “I cannot fool this guy anymore. I must give up Benjamin.” And when he came to the end of that and said, “I cannot finagle this one; I will give Benjamin.” What happened? Joseph was restored to him. This was a whole new grace.

Not only that, but there is also more grace sufficient in my weakness. “I cannot do this; I have no ability to do this. Why are You asking me to do this, Lord?” “Because My grace is sufficient for you. My grace is sufficient to help you suffer.” I am reading an autobiography of Madam Guyonne, “My grace is sufficient for you to suffer.” My grace is sufficient for you to give hospitality to your neighbor so they might see the light of Christ in you. My grace is sufficient for that. Even if your cooking does not match up, My grace is sufficient for that too.”

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

So, what is this grace? Let’s nail it down. In John 14:16-18 Jesus is speaking to His disciples: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not know behold Him or Know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

He abode with them because Christ was with them, but when Christ left them and went to the Father, the Helper was sent down.”

G. Campbell Morgan wrote this: “The greatest resource of God’s grace to us is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.” I think Tozer once said, “It is the most unknown thing that God has done for us is the indwelling of the Spirit. So many of us have no idea that the Spirit indwells us in such a way that He enables the Christ-life to live within us. So, this then is the mediation of the High Priest, mediating the new covenant to us. The new covenant in Ezekial in chapter 36 talks about, “I will put My Spirit in you.” And in Jeremiah 31:31-34 it says, “They will know Me.” Let’s deal with that as the new covenant.

The Holy Spirit Show Us the Nature of God by His Word

What does that mean? First, the Holy Spirit now opens the Word of God to us and reveals who God is. “In the beginning was the Word.” He reveals it to us in a way that is understandable. How do you explain to a blind man what a mountain is? Have you ever thought about that? How do you explain what blue is? If you have a seeing man who does not know your language and you

are trying to explain to him something. There is a mountain in front of us. He is living in a plain and has never seen a mountain, so you bring a picture, "It is a mountain." "Oh, that's a mountain." Now he has some understanding of things.

And the Lord does this for us. He gives us the Holy Spirit to open the Word to us to reveal through the Word what God is like. That is why it is so important when we think about the law, we always think of the law as being a bunch of rules. Well, all these rules explain the nature of God.

We are studying Ruth, and if you want to see the nature of God, let's look at Ruth. Here you find Boaz, and he is doing exactly what the law of God says. "What you need to do is not pick up all the grain and let the poor people pick up what is left after threshing it." That is what he was doing. But Boaz saw more into God than just a rule saying that you do not do this. He saw a way of providing for other people. Then we see him in Ruth chapter 2, and he is not only not picking up after himself but leaving bits and pieces behind on purpose because he found out that God's heart is to care about these people. That gives you a whole other aspect of who God is, doesn't it? He is not just a guy who is up in the sky writing rules for us to obey. He is saying, "This is what I am like. I let my rain fall on the just and the unjust."

Experiential Knowledge of God

So, we see Him in the Word, and what we see of Him in the Word makes us worship. Then through the Word He prompts us in the works of faith. When we come to know God not by letter but by experience, because every time we take a step of faith, God meets that step of faith, and we see that God is faithful or God is able. Suddenly, our knowledge of God is not just a book knowledge; it is an experiential knowledge. This is grace to us. He writes God's Word or God's law on our hearts. And this is for my daughter who talks about more applications here.

Moses brought down ten commandments. The Holy Spirit writes two commandments in our hearts, not on our hearts, in our hearts. The greatest of these is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

If we read the Word as we go out, and we are prompted into these words, we begin to find out who God is, and it evokes this response. The evoking of this response is that when we see it, we must be subjective in some of this. He begins to show us who He is through the Word, and by our stepping out in faith we find out who He is, and what He asks us to do is good and right and perfect. Suddenly, our whole outlook on Him changes, and we see that He is worthy to be worshipped; He is worthy to give ourselves to.

Then it says, "The second one is like this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

How does this apply? When He writes these laws, these things we see in the Word, He will lead us out to minister to other people. I do not mean to preach to them. There are all sorts of ways that we can minister to other people. We can drive them somewhere. We can cook them a meal. We can go with them to dinner. We can help them in their yard work. We can babysit for them. There are all sorts of things that we can do.

But the whole thing is that we are led to act in agreement with His leading us. You see, we must come to agreement with Him, otherwise we will not do anything. I will not do anything if I cannot agree with you that is the thing to do. When the Lord starts saying, "This person needs a visit," I can say, "Gee whiz, Jerry can go visit him. Anyway, he is better than me. He is more outgoing," but the Lord says, "No, I want you." Lord, I don't have anything to say." "Let's go." And when I came to that agreement, suddenly, I found the Lord writing that kindness into my heart. He is writing these things in my heart, but the practical thing is my stepping out when I am hearing the Lord speaking to me. I am obeying that voice of His in my spirit, and there I find out He is leading me to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God. The Holy Spirit is taking Christ and He is disclosing Him to me so that I can disclose Him to others. This is the grace of God to us.

Every Joint Supplies

One more little facet of this grace is that He has put us in His body. He has made us members one of another. It is not that we are in some little religious club, but we become joints of supply (see Ephesians 4:16). We become joints of supply of the life of Christ to each other. That is the importance of grace. All this is grace, and this is what God has given to us. This is the supply for us. It is not only that there is something about dwelling together in harmony. Like I said, I like war movies, and Band of Brothers, Band of Camaraderie is a great title for this. Not only is there a kind of familial kind of connection. I will do things for my brother that I will not do for friends. But there is also camaraderie. And there is also a saying, "I have your back. I will go out with you into battle. I will go with you and be with you through it." If you ever played team sports, it is the same thing. You get into a team situation, and everybody has their role, and sometimes when somebody cannot play their role, someone steps up and becomes that joint of supply.

I just want to tell one thing because this puts me in a bad light. When my dad died, on the day of the funeral we had our Tuesday night Bible study. It was my turn to teach, and people said, "We will teach it for you." "Oh, no, I can do it." I should never have said that. It was a disaster until one brother stepped in and took the bone, and he rescued the Bible study because he stepped in as a joint of supply. He knew the supply in me was clogged, and he stepped in, and the Bible study was a lot better because of that. Joints of supply in the body of Christ are important things. If you want to see better things, look in Nehemiah chapters 3-4. They are working together building the wall. They have each other's back; they are fighting for each other. It is a wonderful thing of the body of Christ.

Meaning of The Upper Spring and the Lower Spring

Now let's apply this. How then is our life like these two springs? The upper spring has been done in the heavenlies. That is all the blood of Christ. Everything that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is given to us is that upper spring. This upper spring is never going to dry up; it is an eternal spring, and it is never going to dry. And this is the place where we are supplied with the strength just to be in the world. This is where we find God's rest. We find the rest of God for us in this place.

The lower spring is when all those things that are in the heavens come down to us who are on earth. The conveying of the blessings and the riches of Christ are secured for us, and they are brought down to us. As we walk with Him through the course of life, He is giving us the sources of life in the Holy Spirit our Helper. And this is His ministry to lead us to the end that God has for us, that place and that purpose, not just being a child but growing up into sonship finally.

So, in closing I just want to say this. I want to end with Psalm 16:5-6: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup. Thou does support or maintain my lot." Everything here in this upper spring, everything in the lower spring is maintained by God. He maintains my lot.

This is weird when I think of this. Oxea and Athena are in the desert, and the Palmist here says, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places." What he is saying is, it does not matter that I am in the desert. Why does it not matter that I am in the desert? Why can I consider this a pleasant place? Because I have been given two springs. My source of life is not in the desert; it is in the springs. And this has been given to me.

There is a devotional called, "Streams in the Desert" which comes out of Isaiah 35:6. We have been given streams in the desert. He has given me upper and lower springs, and this leads me to the end. This is God's supply for me so that I, along with Paul, can say, "I have finished the course." When the time comes, I will have finished the course. I am not there yet; I have not finished the course. I do not see myself as dying soon, but who knows? But I do see myself in a desert. Hopefully, my eyes are beginning to see the two springs that have been given to me so that in this desert I can say, "My lot is a good thing; the vines are pleasant."

Let's pray:

Lord, I just want to thank You that even though I may not have said these things well, they are all true. Lord, I pray for myself that I will be entering more and more into the good of my inheritance. And I pray for my brothers and sisters, that they will be standing in the place that You have given them. I pray that each one of them that starts this New Year will not look back and then say, "I have really blown it. Or I cannot make it; there is too much in front of me, and I do not see how I am going to make the next year." I pray for them. I pray that they would see that it is not the earthy part that their eyes should be on but the heavenly, that we should seek the heavenly things. Oh Lord, we are the redeemed ones, the reconciled ones; we are your children, and that You made us priests for Your kingdom. Oh Lord, we want to live in the good of that, and we want to be able to know the indwelling of the Spirit that You have given to us to live in us and through us, that we might know Your supply. Lord, I pray that we would come quickly to the knowledge of ourselves trying to get something and do something, and we would find out that You have the supply that we need, that we long for. And because You have that supply the life is there, and the glory is there. And Lord, I want to thank You for my brothers and sisters, and I want to be a better vessel to convey Your life to them, and I pray for them that they too will be better vessels to convey Your life to me and to one another. Lord, all of this we lay on You. We take our hands off, and we pray that these things would not become just things that are in our notes or on paper, but these things are inscribed in our lives by the Holy Spirit, by the Lover of our souls, Lord Jesus, and a glory to You our heavenly Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.

