

The Fathers

Father, we are so thankful that we could be in Your presence this morning to worship. This is of the highest value to us. It is so edifying to us, and we hope it gives You glory. Thank You, Lord, for the time of worship. Now as we fellowship together, we pray again that Your Spirit would be circulating among us revealing, convicting, capturing, keeping, all those things that You do, and the great mystery of Your perfecting work. Thank You, Lord, that we could be together this hour. Do help me, Lord, to share my heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Planning Meeting

I love to study the Bible, and I am now doing a Bible study on Matthew back in the city, and I am just thoroughly caught in the book of Matthew. There is no other book in the Bible right now for me. I do not know about you, but when you read it and read it and get into something, and you are doing a Bible study, it is wonderful. The juices flow. And one of the things that I discovered, even in the early chapters of Matthew, is that there seems to be a formula that Matthew is trying to convey to us regarding the kingdom of the heavens. Basically, the story in the gospel of Matthew is this: The King is in heaven, and now He is breaking upon the earth through Jesus Christ. And this breaking on the earth is causing great conflict. So, when you look at the whole gospel, you see Christ comes upon the earth, with great conflict against Him. He ends up with the cross, and then heaven rules in the resurrection. But the formula that you can see is that every time there is a kingdom proclamation, there is an immediate resistance and either a ruling or an overruling.

Now I say that because when we come to something like a planning meeting as we did yesterday, and the older I get the more I realize how little our decisions really weigh into what God is doing. He rules and overrules. So, when we look at circumstances like last year when we did not even have a place, sometimes He overruled. This year we found a place, but we should not necessarily say, "Ah, that means we should go ahead." So, what we have to say is that by God's mercy we feel the Lord has told us, "Let's plow into June, and let the Lord rule and overrule. And that is the way I felt when I considered if we should have a conference. I am so thankful that the Lord gives us impressions, and sometimes we are ruled and overruled in our impressions. That is why it is so precious to come together at a planning time because we can sense a confirmation or an overruling. So, I came with something that the Lord spoke to me about. I did not share it yesterday because for me it was a confirmation or overruling what I thought and what proceeded. That is the wonderful thing about the body of Christ. You do not have to have your own opinion, and it always be right. But when you submit your opinion and then you find out, am I wrong? Let's see what the body has to say. Sure enough, the very word that the Lord gave to me somebody else spoke yesterday. Ah hah, I think that is a clue. So, I want to share that word with you, and I have not even started my message yet.

It comes from I John 2, and John, of course, is the great apostle of recovery. He is trying to recover things. And this wonderful place in verse 12 where he has this little side thing which was brought up yesterday by one of the sisters, and that was the confirmation that I was wanting.

The Over-the-Hill Gang

I try to get some impression: “What about it, Lord, should we have a conference? We are all like the Over-the-Hill Gang. I do not know if you know who they are. Actually, Kenny thinks it is the Washington Redskins because in 1971 they were called the Over-the-Hill Gang. I think the quarterback, along with everybody else, was so old. The Over-the-Hill Gang was a movie in 1969, maybe before some of your time. It is about a bunch of old guys that were over-the-hill, and they used to be Texas rangers. They would go into a town that was corrupted and bust it up. The sheriff and the mayor were corrupted because what do they have to lose? They were going to die anyway. Well, that is the way I felt about the conference. We are like the Over-the-Hill Gang. So, as I am praying and listening and thinking, I only got one word, and I had to sort it out. The word that came to me was “the fathers.”

Spiritual Fathers

I John 2:12-14: “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

As soon as I considered and realized that all He had to say to me was the fathers, I realized what my burden is, and it is this. As I traverse the body of Christ, thank God, there are so many people saved all over the world, people saved by the grace of God. Truly there is more work being done beyond the United States than in the United States itself. There is a tremendous harvest going on right now. But as I look around and look at ministers that I must respect for truly wanting to serve the Lord, there are many who come to the level of young men. That is to say, they know the Word, they have the Lord abiding in them, they can preach, contend, fight for the fight of faith, but the fathers—how many fathers do we know? Across the whole span of Christianity, when you listen to Christian radio or watch Christian television, how many can you truly say are “the fathers?” Because the fathers are those who know Him who is from the beginning. In other words, they have seen something of the eternal Father, and it has reshaped the way they approach everything. And when I thought of the number of fathers that the Lord has enabled to be found in our midst I realized that also the context of this chapter is this. He goes right on to say, “Now you know something? The world is passing away, and the fathers have got to sow seeds while they can.”

In II Timothy 2:2 Paul said, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Fathers, spiritual fathers, which by the way can be male or female. As an example, yesterday, I hate to embarrass people, but that is just the way I am. Jessica is a father. You can hear it in what she says. She has seen and knows Him who is from the beginning. When you find in the assembly

just such people, it is as rare as hen's teeth. You can find all kinds of Charismatic powerful preachers who are at that level of young men with the Word of God and the power of God, but how many fathers? Because it is fathers who can multiply and pass on the torch to generation after generation. It is fathers who are seed bearers. It is fathers whose lives as much as their message passes on a seed that produces other children, little children, young men who could become fathers. And so what is interpreted to me simply is this: yes, the Lord is coming very soon. We need to scatter seed while we can.

Then I thought of all the fathers. You know who I thought of immediately when I was thinking of fathers, and this is why I say that it has nothing to do with gender. This is talking about a spiritual level, and I thought of Marilyn Devries. My kids are in their fifties, but I am sure they could tell you everything she taught them as they passed through the Richmond Family Conference. Now there was a father. She was so full of the Lord; she was so crazy in love with the Lord. She should have written the book, "Crazy Love," but somebody else stole her title. However, she just threw seeds everywhere. She had those junior high kids in her midst, and they will never be the same. Isn't that amazing! We have fathers.

My point is this: when the Lord said to me, "In the Christian Family Conference, it is not a question of how good the speakers are. Half the things that happened that have eternal value in those conferences was not even what the speakers spoke. They were things somebody said in the children's class where they saw a young person working with an older person. That older person touched the younger person's life while they were working together. So much was going on with the scattering of seeds through those conferences.

I do not have much stock in the Over-the-Hill Gang preachers, and I am including myself. But I believe when God has an opportunity to sow seed at the very brink of His coming back, He says, "Let's do it!" What do you have to lose, Over-the-Hill Gang? It is just the matter of gathering together and sowing some seeds. There are some people who have never seen this eternal God before, and to get that opportunity just before the Lord comes back to see some young people come into fatherhood is such a privilege. I think we have some post teen age fathers. Think about that. How amazing that is, and how rare that is!

I was a Baptist preacher for ten years until Brother Kaung killed me, and I had no idea what it meant to know Him who is from the beginning. I was preaching the gospel, and people were getting saved. People called me an evangelist and a revivalist because I was kind of in the Keswick thing. I had no idea how to stretch back your understanding to eternity and then bring it forward. I had no idea, but that was my thought. Now maybe you had other impressions, and that is fine.

I have come to a few conference planning meetings, and then I was overruled in what I thought should happen. That is alright because it is not so much how valuable my opinion is. It is that the Lord gets His way. So we head out toward June, and if the whole thing collapses like a house of cards, and William and Mary turns against us, then we take it as from the Lord. That is why every time you take a kingdom action there is a contention against it, and then there is either the heavens rules or the heavens over rules, and we learn lessons either way. So that is how I came to sense the affirmation when one of the sisters said, "Well, we have fathers, we have young

men, and we have little children coming up through the ranks.” And that is all I had to hear; that was the ‘amen’ for me.

Four Fathers in the Bible

I wanted to bring before you four of the old fathers in the Bible. In 1970 I was twenty-five years old, and I was a home missionary. The Southern Baptist screwed a halo on my head and sent me up to New York to headquarter the work in Metropolitan New York. I had just been saved for five years. I got up there and was immediately made the pastor of three churches. There was a central church and two satellite churches which the former home missionary had already set up. He was much better than I was. When I got there, the programs were already in place. So here is what happened. Every first Monday of the month this church that I was the home missionary of had a program to go into the Bowery mission. The Bowery in Manhattan is where they dealt with alcoholics. There were two things going on; there were alcoholics that came in off the street, and they would feed them. There was also a program in which they took people into. Then they would try to get them saved, go through the process of drying out, having Bible studies and doing things all day long. They had put in this program. So, I got there, and the three deacons showed me where it was, and we drove there together. I spoke on Zacchaeus in the gospel of Luke. Afterwards, one of the guys said to me, “Hey, thanks for speaking on Zacchaeus. You know that he is a regular in our program, meaning that probably one out of every ten pastors that come in there speaks on Zacchaeus. They know him so well that he is a member of the program. So I had four members of the program who were all part of the Over-the-Hill Gang; you know them all well.

Isaiah

I wanted to read the Scriptures and talk about these guys this morning. The first one is Isaiah, and I am getting to the part of Isaiah where he is part of the Over-the-Hill Gang. He is a prophet of meritorious if you want to put it that way. We would not say that he was retired.

Isaiah 62:1-2: We have this thrilling almost final passage in Isaiah. “For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.”

Verses 6-7: “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

There is old Isaiah who is standing on the walls, seventy-five years old, over-the-hill, and he has a new job. Why is he up there? Why is he standing up there with Shear-Jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, his two sons? They are up on the walls, yelling and shouting and carrying on; what is going on? We will see that he has a new vocation, if I can put it that way.

Habakkuk

The second guy that is in the program, we call him Habby, you would know him as Habakkuk. All these verses were mentioned yesterday because these guys were all members of the program.

Habakkuk 2:1-4: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak with me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint. And Jehovah answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith."

Now there is old Habby, and we see him there upon the ramparts quite similar to Isaiah, only a hundred years later. What is he doing? You know the whole story of Habby, of course. He is singing the Shigionoth on some kind of instrument, but we do not know what it was. But he was singing the Shigionoth. So, what is he all excited about, this seventy-five-year-old Habby? What is going on here that has gotten him upon the ramparts? He has seen something, and it changed his whole life.

Haggai

The third guy is Haggai, and he is just as old as dirt.

Haggai 2:6,9: ""For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.... 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts.""

There is old Haggai; now he is not standing upon the rampart because there were no rampart. Jerusalem was in ruins; there was no temple, nothing. He was standing on the ruins, but he was standing there with Zechariah, a young cohort. And he was standing there with a new lease on life. He has seen something. I think you will catch a thread in every one of these saints—they had seen something. They are resurrected with their retired ministries, and this is how they are fathers.

Barnabas

Now the fourth guy, and you will have to give me a little latitude here, because I know all of you will not agree with this. The fourth guy is Barnabas, and I believe he wrote Hebrews. Now if you think Paul wrote Hebrews, fine, if you think it was Apollos, fine. Just bear with me, I know it was Barnabas, and I will explain.

In Hebrews 12:22-24 we find Barnabas sharing something that was vivifying.

"but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men

made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than *that of* Abel.”

Now here is old Barnabas, over seventy years old, and do not forget this is just before 70 AD. Barnabas had seen something, and what he had seen was the great High Priest. He had also seen those brothers and sisters he spoke about in Hebrews 11 in the Hall of Faith. They are standing on Mount Zion along with Jesus and with him. And he is up there and he is telling the saints, “Get over here on Mount Zion.” Now why is he doing that? What has he seen?

The Lord has Fathers in His churches

When we see the Over-the-Hill Gang, what kind of basis do we have? Truly, are we fathers? Nobody, of course, would take a title like that. How about you? Have you seen Him, the eternal One who is from the beginning? That is the one qualification. It is not age; it is not gender. I cannot say that I am a father. I suppose in one way, maybe, but one thing I know, God changed my life through the Richmond Family Conference because I met two fathers in Brother Stephen and Lance. When you meet fathers, when fathers minister, they drop seed that remains, not just fruit. Jesus says in John 15, “fruit that remains.” That is the kind of fertility you have with fathers because they have seen something. There is no doubt in my mind that the sovereignty of God, I know it, sent me from New York as a Charismania preacher by that time. I had left the Baptist, so I got the left shoe of fellowship from the Baptist, and because I was a Charismaniac I am now going wild all over the place. And the Lord sent me down from New York to Raleigh, NC to build this kingdom church down there—so I thought. No, that was not it.

He set me to Raleigh in 1973, and once a month Brother Stephen would come to town and kill me softly with his song. But there was a two-verse song that he always preached—the cross and the church. Sometimes he took a bridge with the overcomer, but every month he came. He was teaching I Samuel one month to this crowd in Raleigh. They were all Charismatic Catholic background. The fact that Stephen would even go there blew me away. But he just hovered in I Samuel, but I saw the cross in everything that Saul did, but I saw the church in everything that David did. It was amazing. How could he come up with this stuff? He just killed me, but I know it was the Sovereign God ruling from heaven, sending me down to Raleigh to kill me. What a tremendous thing to discover!

And then to add a double-fold sovereignty to the whole thing. My father-in-law, a wonderful Christian man and a tremendous personal witness. I can legitimately say that he has led more than 2,000 people to the Lord. He was a true witness. And he knew Norman Grubb who came to his house every year back in the sixties. And Norman Grubb also was the evangelist who brought me to the Lord, if you can imagine such a guy being an evangelist. But the deal was this: Norman Grubb said, “When you go to London, check out Lance Lambert.” And my father-in-law went to London to Halford House. He met Lance Lambert, and my father-in-law, a solid Southern Baptist, said, “Man, they have something there.” It just happened to be the time when the Christian Family Conference began having Lance come down to speak. So he would go to North Carolina, and I would get to sit there for three or four days and drink tea with Lance and pump him with questions. Can you imagine a Baptist minister talking to Lance about the church? It was a sovereign thankful part of my life. Who could arrange such a thing? Two brothers, so great and

so full of heat. Everything they would say was like a seed dropped out. It was fantastic. Then of course the “*pièce de résistance*” was when I went to the conference at Randolph Macon, and for me it was like this. At that time everybody sang from this one book, “Scripture in Song.” Do you remember that one? When they sang, “This is my rest forever, here will I dwell.” I had found home.

Now that meant that I had to leave the ministry and quit the church I was part of and substitute teaching junior high school. That brought me to where Chip is today, substitute teaching school, but I found home. I went back to Raleigh and stayed there because I found the home that was there was built by the seed of Brother Stephen, and I was glad to be part of that. So I am just saying, God rules and overrules; heaven rules. That is the story of the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens. Heaven rules, and you cannot stop it. He will rule and overrule, and I have had both. And I thank God that our God can do whatever He wants to do, whatever we think we should do. So I ended up caught and kept. Some sister had that two-fold thing yesterday in the meeting—caught and kept—and I kind of like that. Then, of course, when I got to meet everybody here, I saw that I had a family, and that there were many others we might even be stretched to imagine as fathers.

Back in 1975 when I first went to the conference in Randolph Macon, I do not know whether there were many fathers here then. I guess there were, but they were mostly sisters. I do not think the brothers were quite fathers yet. But there were some sisters who were well into fatherhood. That is why the Lord sent these two brothers to us. What a one-two punch! I loved it; and the two messages were so different. Stephen was in the morning, Lance in the evening, and Johannes in the middle time. Have you ever been in a place where somebody brought vision of the testimony of Jesus? Not only that, they brought solid Bible study along with it, and a kingdom sense of timing and burden. I have never seen any conference that touched all three of those things, but those brothers did that all the time. They were fathers.

I went to college, and I went to seminary with these exalted professors, but I have never heard a Bible teacher as good as Stephen Kaung. I know there are some people who cannot take Stephen Kaung; he is too deep for them. Well, I can tell you one thing, those people are not fathers. What wonderful teaching; I mean solid Bible teaching, not just stuff, not just visions that were not of God: “Hallelujah, God give me a prophecy.” Everything was nailed in the Scripture.

But there was heavenly vision, and a kingdom burden to boot. No wonder we have such an off scouting of the Over-the-Hill Gang here, a bunch of fathers, you produce fathers. It is so wonderful; it is God’s doing. This is such a wonderful opportunity we have, and even the gathering yesterday was just a continuation of that which God sovereignly did years ago, and I am so thankful for it because I met a Savior but more than a Savior, a Bridegroom. I never in my Baptist days really connected emotionally with the fact that I have a Groom, and I think as a man that is kind of something you resist in the natural.

And not just the Lord, but Christ our life. And not just the church but a home. We feel at home because the Father felt at home in Christ corporate, and that is how we felt at home. I do not know about you but these are the things that were built year after year, whatever the subject is. I think the brothers just came up with a kind of a game. Let’s give them a subject and then let

them go. Many times, Lance did not even pay attention to the subject; he just went where he went, but wherever it was there was life.

Fathers Plant Seeds

And what do you think the Lord was doing? Giving us a good time? Giving us a vacation, a Christian vacation? You can have a Christian vacation in a hundred different ways. He was planting seeds. The whole theme of the Gospel of Matthew is that the kingdom of heaven comes by planting seed. The sower in Matthew 13 is the main parable of the whole gospel. That is the way Jesus did it; that is what Matthew wants you to see. How does the kingdom grow? How does the kingdom come? Seeds, and we receive seeds.

If you are a father and you have seen the heavenly vision, it is awfully hard to hold onto it sometimes because so much distracts. I know that sometimes it is hard for me to keep my vision clear because there is so much distraction around with smaller things. And sometimes I cannot explain what I am seeing because my mind has gotten a little dull. And sometimes I have the words, but I feel like I have lost the vision of the words that I am saying. As our dear sister shared yesterday, heavenly vision is a fragile thing. You just do not have heavenly vision and that's it, you got it. You can lose it by disobedience, you can lose it by laziness, you can lose it by not being exercised. There are so many ways. Of course, the Lord has His ways of circling us back around into that which we have. I am so thankful for that. But we need to take seriously the Lord has fathers, and He wants fathers planting seed.

I saw the lineup yesterday of the children's classes, and I see fathers, I see sisters and brothers who are fathers who are going to be planting seeds in the children who will be coming this summer, God willing. Seed planting is a tremendous thing. So somehow, I hope it is true for all of you, I hope it is true for myself. I believe today more than ever, even though I might not explain it as clear as I could have ten years ago, I know the burden of the father that He has put in me. There is something there I have seen. I always hope I can communicate it, but there is something there whether I can explain it or not. And based on that, I look forward to the conference coming up and any role that I can be part of.

The Four Fathers in the Bible Continue

Now we want to look at our four brothers who are in the program because they are right with us in this whole matter of heavenly vision. But before we look into the individuals, we will just touch on it for a moment. I will not bore you with things you already know.

Passing Seeds onto the Next Generation

There are two things that we notice immediately that all four of them have in common. And those two things are this. First, the reason God resurrected their ministry into its final chapter is to pass seeds onto the next generation. You cannot help but notice that. It is not just that Isaiah is on the wall; he is on the wall with his two sons. There was something being transferred there. And why is Habakkuk receiving a vision? So that those who read it may run. There is something that has to happen after that. And why did Haggai receive this vision that he received? It is so that Zechariah could get the vision from Haggai and cast it on down the line, dominos falling. And even

for Barnabas. There he is an old man, but perhaps he is too old to be an apostle traveling around, but he has this burden for his Jewish Christian brethren, that they get to the true Mount Zion, even as the old physical Mount Zion was about to crumble and be crushed by the Romans. It is all a seed sowing thing.

Time of Crisis

The second thing is this. All four of them are fathers at a time of crisis, which unfortunately the saints never picked up on. It is amazing that the end of the world is going to come, and the saints will not know it for the most part. Now there are those who know and sense that something is about to happen. But you know, we are having this Israeli conflict thing now, and most Christians have no idea that it could be connected to the very end. Something could trip, and our whole nation could be destroyed, the whole thing taken down, financially in ruins. It is so close, but most Christians have no idea. It is just like in that day, they had no idea.

Isaiah

Isaiah was still prophesying upon the walls in the days of Manasseh when everything was still cool in Judah. But Zion had been corrupted from within by the sinfulness of not only the people but the priests. And only the daughters of Zion were crying out because something was wrong. Isaiah had something to speak to a nation that did not know that they were going to go down the tube and go into captivity very soon. They had no idea; there was this lie that they would go up in the church and have a great time.

Habakkuk

Habby is the same way. It was too late because the Chaldeans were coming into Judah. But they were up in the north, and they were coming down. He explained what was happening in there, and he is all upset about it. Most of the rest of the people in Jerusalem said, "Yeah, what is going on? The enemy can never take over Jerusalem." And Habby was saying, "Lord, You are about to crush this whole thing, and I am upset about it. You are not doing this thing right. What is going on?"

Haggai

What can I say about Haggai? He was standing on the ruins of Jerusalem in the temple, and there was a crisis. These dear people, this remnant had gone back from Babylon at great sacrifice. Everybody got back there, and there was some flack because when you decide to do something, there is always contention in the kingdom, and there is either a ruling or an overruling. At that time because of the contention the work stopped, and everybody started watching the house hunters, and they started redesigning their homes. Now don't tell me they did not love the Lord, but they were just busy gut renovating their own thing, just like most Christians today when we are right at the end.

Barnabas

Barnabas also was in a time of crisis. You think those Jewish Christians really had quite grasped that it was 68 AD, let's just get two years of slack here before Rome destroys Jerusalem, the temple, their whole system of worship, the priesthood, everything was gone. And two years before this happened, do you think that the Jews had any idea? Most of them did not have a clue. But there are always harbingers, and that is one thing about the remnant.

Who are the harbingers? It is like the robin in the spring. When you see the robins, yeah! Springtime is coming. The most notable harbinger that we know about is the cockroach. Out on the West Coast they actually use cockroaches because they always signal when there is a seismic disruption of some kind. With all their laboratories, all those gismos and computers going, they have roaches in their dryer. Oh, oh, something is about to happen because the cockroaches can tell the earthquake is coming.

Well, Barnabas was a cockroach, and fathers are cockroaches, and that is why they are always considered a bit crazy. You remember, the old guy in his last several years of messages would say, "Jesus is coming very soon. Are you ready?" Some people could receive that. A lot of people said, "What are you talking about? The United States is going good. Everything is better and better. Now that we have Biden on, everything is really going to be good." What is this guy talking about? But with some of the cockroaches you can see the antenna. A person who is a father, who has seen Him who is from the beginning has got some sense of the KTZ, the Kingdom Time Zone and knows things are very near.

Isaiah Saw Zion is a Person that the Messiah Desires

Isaiah is upon the wall, and his lifetime vision you can truly say is this: he had a vision of the testimony of Jesus. He saw Jesus from the very beginning, and it lasted with him all the way through. In Isaiah chapter 6, he saw that Man, who was called as he saw the Adoniah on the throne, that means a Man upon that throne, and then the angel said, "No, it is Jehovah on the throne." And now Isaiah must deal with the fact that there is a Man-God, who is his real King. "Isaiah, this is your King," and it was his first vision of the testimony of Jesus.

Then in chapter 7 it turns out that a virgin is going to conceive, and His name is Immanuel. The guy's name is Immanuel! Then in chapter 9, "Unto us a Son is born, a child is given, the government will be on His shoulders." "Wait a minute, He is going to be born here?" "Yes, in a place of darkness, and there is going to be a great light." In chapter 12, there is a branch; a root of Jesse is going to spring up, and He is going to rule." And he keeps seeing more and more of the Lord Jesus.

So his ministry went from just being a prophet to becoming a watchman. And such a watchman because he could see from a heavenly point of view. It touched eternity when he saw the seraphim and the Lord on the throne. And he looked at all the nations like Babylon. When he looked at Babylon, what did he see? From the point of view of heaven Babylon was being run by Satan, who wanted to ascend to the heights and rule everything. That is what was behind the Greek power of the Babylonian Empire for Nebuchadnezzar to come and crush everything

because somebody was behind the scenes. Isaiah was a watchman because he could see it. And out of his watchmanship, he became an intercessor with his greatest victory being when he and Hezekiah got together and interceded, and 185,000 Assyrians were destroyed. Then the Assyrian King lost in the attack on Jerusalem and went home, and his two sons killed him in the temple, a day he went back in his hometown.

But it is considered by the Jews, the secular Jews, to this day, the greatest miracle in Judah history, not Israel's history, but Judah's greatest miracle was what happened when Isaiah and Hezekiah laid before the Lord the claims of Assyria, and said, "Lord, do something about it." And they saw a heaven rule. Then Hezekiah went a little crazy and got proud. And when Hezekiah died, Isaiah had nothing more to do. But that is when the Lord woke him up and said, "Wait; I am giving you something more in the testimony." Just to say, "I have seen the testimony of Jesus," but the testimony keeps increasing, and he kept growing in his understanding. The next thing he sees is a Holy One who has become the Redeemer. Beginning in Isaiah 40 and going forward, there is a Holy One who is a Redeemer. That must be God, and yet a Redeemer means the new Kinsman is a Man? He is seeing something about the Lord, and then a little further on he says, "Wait a minute, this Redeemer is a suffering Servant. In Isaiah 52 He dies for us to bring us into redemption. Wow, what a testimony! But now we find him upon the wall. What is going on? He has another job. What is his job now? A remembrancer. Now listen! Asking an old man to be a remembrancer is really doing something. But this is his new job.

"Isaiah, I have a new job for you. I know you are a meritorious prophet. I want you to be a remembrancer." Now what does that mean? You know before they had computers, kings had remembrancers, and these guys kept track of everything they said. If they made a decree, they reminded him of it. They kept up the history of the court. So, you remember in the story of Esther, one night the king could not sleep, he brought in the remembrancer it says in Hebrews. And the guy starts reading about Mordecai saving the king's life. It just so happened; the heavens were ruling. And so the Lord says, "Now wait, I want you to be a remembrancer," and he said, "What do you want people to remember?" Basically, he is back in Zion, he has seen Zion, and I think for the first time perhaps he saw right through to where we are when he saw that Zion was a Person. Now up to that time he saw Zion as the city, Zion as the throne of God. Now he sees Zion as a Person. How does that happen? When you look back in Isaiah 62 and you hear what the Son of God says.

Isaiah 62:1: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as the brightness, and Her salvation as a burning torch."

Now this is the Messiah talking about Zion, and somehow, he loves Zion. As you go on you will see that He says, "You are going to be a crown of beauty, and your name will not be 'Forsaken and Desolate,' your name is going to be 'Beulah.' He had seen Zion as a Person. What is He talking about? Then He says, "Now your job, Isaiah, verse 6, "I want you to be a remembrancer. And listen to the catch here, this is a wonderful thing. Of course, does God need to be reminded of something? But look at what he says. In Verse 6: "I have set watchmen upon Thy walls O Jerusalem, and they shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye who are Jehovah's remembrancers take no rest, give Him no rest." He is talking to God. So here is what happened.

The Son, the Messiah, tells the remembrancer to remind the Father. "Father, You promised I would have a bride." Get up on the wall and remind the Father." Do we have to remind the Father that the Son wants a bride? Of course not! It is for us. But they got up on the wall with a whole new life to remind the Lord to do what only the Lord can do. This is the work of a Father.

How many of you have asked him, "Father, come get Your bride. Jesus wants a bride." Do you pray that kind of stuff? I remember when Lance was speaking once and for the first time, I saw that the church was a Person. Isaiah came to the end of his life before he saw that because, of course, that is something that is now revealed to all saints if they want to see it.

The church is a Person, a corporate Person. All of us probably grew up in a church organization. There I was, a Baptist Pastor with a bunch of saved people, all doing things. But I am telling you, in what happened today I saw that the church was a Person; it was my undoing. The pastor used to whip and beat up people, feed the sheep, club the goats, all that kind of stuff. Then one day when I saw that the church was a Person, you cannot do that with people. If you have a testimony of Jesus, you see that the church is a Person, a whole living thing. You do not treat it like an organization; you are not the organizational head. So, God just chopped my head off, and I resigned. I went before the Raleigh group, took my ordination paper, tore it up and threw it down. I started substitute teaching, which is a much higher and nobler job.

But the point is Isaiah was seeing that somehow Zion is a Person that the Messiah desires. He did not just want a throne in Jerusalem. Yes, he did, but there was something more there. So he was telling this and praying upon the wall, and guess who was getting the benefit of it. Shear-Jashub, "a remnant will return." That is the name of the son. And the other son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, meaning "judgment is coming very soon." They are upon the wall, seeds are being planted, and these guys are planting for the next generation of things to come. So, a father is somebody who has such a revelation of the testimony of Jesus that they really see that the testimony of Jesus is not just Jesus; it is Jesus and His Zion and His church and His bride. "I am going to call her my bride", and Isaiah is going: "What? What? Was that just a metaphor?" If you read this, there is no metaphor going on here; there is something much more.

Habakkuk Saw the Eternal Purpose of the Absolutely Sovereign God

Now we come to Habakkuk the father, who was waiting upon the rampart, and he began to sing a song. What was it that he saw? In the end he was part of the Bowery mission, and he retired in protest. "God, You are doing things wrong. Now I am a prophet, and I know what You should do. Bless the righteous and You should chastise the unfaithful. But here You are blessing the unrighteous and chastising the faithful. And that is unlike You, God; You are doing something wrong." And he gave God a good piece of his mind. But then, of course, being a prophet, he knew better. I think he felt bad about it. "Okay, let me climb upon the ramparts and make God smush me like a watermelon. I am just going to wait. Alright God, I know I spoke out of turn. I am wrong, I know something is wrong."

Did the Lord smush him? The Lord said, "No, no, let me take you back to eternity. As surely as I live, all the earth is going to be filled with the glory of the Lord." What are You saying? "Come back and see a vision of My eternal purpose. I do what I want to do, and whatever I want to do is

going to put this glory over the whole earth. Heaven rules, Habakkuk, not you and your understanding. The tiny understanding of man is nothing. When Job saw God, all his questions were answered. You see, our lives are disparate parts.

So, there I was this minister. I must do more evangelism, but wait I have to go do some pastoral counseling. How about my own family, and I want my own time. Besides, I like golf. We were working around trying to get priority. Our lives are made up of so many disparate parts, it is confusing. Young people are saying, "I wish I knew how to prioritize my life." You see the God of eternity; He prioritizes your life. Once you see the eternal God, who is absolutely sovereign, it is an all-encompassing reality that solves all your earthly questions. All these disparate parts line up as if this were a magnet and just filing. But if you do not have this Christian life, it remains as kind of a disparate confusion down on this earth. Oh, but to see a vision of the eternal One and His eternal purpose!

Habakkuk saw the eternal purpose of God, and he started singing. You know the song: "Though the fig tree does not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. God the Lord is my strength."

He passed that along, and the younger generation took his vision and ran with it right through the tribulation because Habakkuk was one of the last prophets along with Jeremiah before the captivity into Babylon. "I am going to give the saints such a vision that they will be able to run through captivity and still be faithful to the Lord. I want you to see this; the Lord is able to do all things. And Lord, while You do Your thing in that way, will you revive Your work in the midst of the years?"

And you know, it is a fearful thing to pray that prayer because the Lord revives with a strong hand. When we say revive Thy work, we always want Him to bless us and restore us and revive us and refresh us but remember how Habakkuk says it. "Revive Thy work in the midst of the years. In Thy wrath remember mercy. I have heard the report of Your ways and fear. Revive Thy work in the midst of the years." There is some undoing, and I have seen God's ways and I fear.

So, we have a whole Christianity that is so full of love, but they cannot take God's disciplines and God's judgments. You cannot see the eternal purpose of God without the cross doing a work in our lives because there is a reviving that takes place as we let go of things that have kept us from life. So having seen that eternal purpose Habakkuk was set free to sing the Shigionoth, whatever on earth that was. You know that old song, "I am so glad Jesus set me free." I like to sing this song: "I am so glad Jesus let me see. I am so glad Jesus let me see. Glory hallelujah, Jesus let me see." And you say, "Oh Lord, help me to not be disobedient to what You let me see." If you are a father, you know you have seen things, but you have a responsibility to sow seeds. We get that opportunity at the conference, and in every day of our lives. But if we do not see, there is no seed. "Jesus, let me see."

Haggai Saw the Glorious House of God

Haggai was an old guy, the old prophet, and he probably was alive back in the days when there was still Solomon's temple. You are talking about a guy ready to retire. These young yokels, the remnant, came in there, along with young Zerubbabel and Joshua who had come to rebuild the temple. Haggai comes into their midst, and they are all standing on the ruins. He looks at the pile and says, "You know, this could never be compared with Solomon's temple. You remember how they laid the foundation, and some people were so excited about the foundation, but there were some people who were crying. Haggai was in that bunch, and he said, "Man, this is not Solomon's temple. No way! It is impossible!" And it was impossible to build even further because after having a great celebration in the pouring of the concrete for that foundation (it was actually stone) the Samaritan bosses found out about it, and they stopped the work altogether for fifteen years while people watched HGP TV. Now it is impossible, totally impossible. Then God shows Haggai the glorious house of God. They were standing on ruin: "This is the glorious house of God."

It is like for us. If you look in the book of Revelation, where is the church? It is the golden lampstand. You say, "Wait a minute, that is not my church. My church is made out of mud and bubble gum and duct tape." No, no, you are not seeing the church. The church is a glorious church without spots or wrinkle, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Now is that the church or is the church what you see with your human eye? So much of what is called the church today, God discounts. And so much of what is hidden today, God says, "Now that is gold."

Haggai saw this church, and he just said, "You know something; I saw something. The latter glory is going to be greater than the former glory." And young Zachariah was just naïve enough to believe the old prophet. And two months later, it was like dominos. This is what Haggai said, "Thus saith the Lord, I am with you." It hit Zachariah, and within two months he started revealing. He had eight different visions of the coming of the Lord and of the building of that glorious temple, "Not by might nor by power but My Spirit." When Zerubbabel put the top stone on, and then the dominos that Zechariah hit old Zerubbabel and Joshua, and they started saying, "Well, let's start building, that's it." Everybody got together and they started building, and then the enemy came in and tried to stop it, and they got overruled. They sent a letter to Moscow, and Moscow sent the letter back and said, "Oh no, no, you have got to let them build; not only that, but you have to give them gold to help them build." The heavens rule! Haggai had to see it, and he saw the glorious church.

We can work in the church, and especially if we are brothers in responsibility, it is discouraging when you hear all the stuff that people can say and do and think in the church. But the truth of the matter is that when you see the glorious church, you go for the gold. You see what is gold, and you build what is gold. Don't forget what church is going to look like one day. It will be a bride coming down from heaven, precious stones, jasper, transparent gold, silver. That is what the church is, that is what the church is going to be. When we see a vision, it is always something perfected that enables us to do the work of perfecting. You do not start with this church as miserable, but I am going to make it something. You start with the church, and you come up to that vision because that is the reality, and this is the in between process.

Barnabas saw Mount Zion as Jesus the Great High Priest with His People

We come now to old man Barnabas. He was loved by everybody. One of those few prophets who had such love, you cannot help but love him. Of course, he started out there in Jerusalem, then he went back to Cyprus and sold a plot of land and brought it back and gave all the money to the church. What a generous heart, big heart guy! And he is the guy when things were going on with the Gentiles, the brothers sent him to Cyprus. He had a great heart and was full of the Holy Spirit and encouragement. So, they said, "We are going to call him Barny, which means Son of encouragement." His name was actually Joseph the Levite. And then he went over there and not only did he encourage the saints at Antioch, but then he went up and got Saul of Tarsus. He went up to Tarsus and dragged him back to Antioch, and said, "Join me in the work." His whole life story is one of building up. When Mark was cancelled out by Paul, damaged goods, Barnabas took him in and said, "Here, if you are going to do the Lord's work, you do not quit." And Mark said, "Okay," and he wrote the gospel of Mark. So, I am glad Barnabas was around.

He was such a wonderful brother, but he always had a burden because there is something he sees. There is something about the purpose of God; there is something about the testimony of Jesus. There is something about the glorious church that includes Jewish Christians. The whole thing is not complete without them. And now he is looking at his dear brothers, his Jewish brethren who have been saved. He is one of those cockroaches, and he knows the whole thing is about to go down like a house of cards. Jerusalem is about to be destroyed, and his Jewish Christian saints are holding onto the shadows. Barnabas is burdened about it, and he writes the letter to Hebrews; that is my basis.

There he is probably seventy plus years old: "How can I help my brethren come through?" And he sees a vision, and the vision is what we read in Hebrews 12, that is Mount Zion. Now Barnabas saw Mount Zion as did Isaiah that the city was a Person. Now what did Barnabas see Mount Zion was? People. Jews thought God was going to restore Mount Zion when He comes back with the Messiah. It is a temple and a palace for the king and a wonderful city. And Barnabas said, "Look, you are now standing on Mount Zion." And does he mention one material building thing? No. What is Mount Zion. Mount Zion is a bunch of angels, Mount Zion is God the Judge, Mount Zion is righteous men made perfect, Mount Zion is those hall of fame people from Hebrews chapter 11. There is Mount Zion. Mount Zion is the church of the first born. Those are the saints who have gone through the trouble, and they have been raptured and they are in their inheritance. That is who is in the kingdom, and you need to get in the kingdom.

So, Mount Zion is the kingdom, and the kingdoms are beings included at the very top, Jesus. And what Barnabas saw enabled the writing of the book of Hebrews and it was this: "Jesus is the great High Priest. That is what will help the Jews get through. "You guys, look who is at the top of the mountain." So, when he says, "Look, lay aside those impediments of those things, he is also including those Jewish things that are holding you back, and run with patience and look at the top of Mount Zion, and who do you see there? Jesus, sprinkling His blood to cleanse you. You are cleansed by Him. He is the great High Priest, and all you must do is draw near unto the throne and find grace to help and mercy for this time of need. That is what You must do. That is what the kingdom is. It is not a place, it is not a building, it is not a temple, it is people who have been saved

and are together who are fathers, who see what is going on, and encourage those brethren to let go of the stuff. Go outside the camp and join Jesus in His mountain—Mount Zion.

There are so many Christians who even today I think they are looking forward to when the kingdom comes, and they do not realize they are in the kingdom now. They do not see that Jesus has already brought them in. It is why it is so precious for me to hear the worship time here today. It was a great privilege because so many people understand how much God loved them and redeemed them by His precious blood. There are a lot of Christians that if you really ask them, “Now are you sure you are saved?” And they say, “I am not sure.” They are not on Mount Zion yet. Of course, by faith you stand on Mount Zion because Mount Zion is heavenly. What is that vision? It is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, innumerable host of angels. That is heavenly, but it is here. There are angels among us; it is here. This whole thing is heavenly, but it is here for those with the faith that perseveres, and lays hold of that rest on Mount Zion, the general assembly of the firstborn. I do not know what else I can say about that, except this, “Barnabas saw that Mount Zion was a Person.” What Person? The kingdom of God including the Jews, including the Gentiles, including all who have been sprinkled by that great High Priest at the top of Mount Zion.

Conclusion

What a silly message! Four old guys, Over-the-Hill Gang, all revived because they had a vision. It is a heavenly vision of Christ and who He is in fullness, and who Zion is, a bride, and with Habakkuk it was a vision of God’s eternal purpose. Heaven rules no matter what I think, and therefore all the earth will be filled with the glory of God. That is my prediction for the future. Haggai said, “The church is a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. Let’s build.” They all started to build and Barnabas said, “Look at the mountain. Don’t you see it? It is full of glory, and it is full of Jesus, and it is full of His Father, and it is full of the saints that have gone on, who are our brethren; look at them.”

That is what fathers do, and let’s pray that all of us learn. There is something regarding vision that touches eternal, and when you see it, it helps us to let go so much of what bothers us and vexes us in this present world. I am not rooting for one party or another for this next election. It is just a garbage heap of mess. But I wonder if that is part of our undoing that is going to lead to the coming of the kingdom. All I know is that I cannot affect the outcome, but I can stand on that mountain, Mount Zion, and I am glad to be there with Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and those guys who saw the heavenly and now are in it. I am glad that I can say, “I am with Brother Lance there on that mountain by faith.” I am standing on something eternal, and we need to share that with folks who are so earth bound even in their Christian faith and have no idea of these eternal wonderful things.

Here is a work going on which Habakkuk saw. What is that? Jesus—all things are being summed up in Christ. All things are being headed up in Christ, the magnet of heaven is on, and all the filings are coming together under Christ. Christ will be Lord of everything. He is the Sovereign God. Who can stop that? Habakkuk says, “Though the fig tree does not blossom, be no fruit in the vine, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will rejoice in the God

of my salvation. God the Lord is my strength. So run on those high hills with your hinds' feet. It is time to go to higher ground."

Dear fathers, brothers and sisters, fathers, praise God. We have something to give, even as weakly and as poorly as we are in our age and our infirmities or whatever we have going on. The Lord will still do what He wants to do, but He wants some people to remind Him to do what He is going to do. We are in such a finished work, it is almost like a joke that we are having to work, but it is a very serious business. I do not know what is going to happen, when the end is coming, but there is something coming down and we need to be serious about what is going to happen this June. We need to pray for our dear sisters and brothers who are going to be teaching the children in the whole thing of music ministry that goes on with teachers whoever they are, with the speakers whoever they are going to be, and the whole thing. Let's just pray for the seed sown.

When I need some encouragement, I go to CTM, listening to old messages no matter if it is Johannes or whoever it is. What a seed sowing ministry, and the ones who are doing this podcast of Lance. There are cockroaches all over the place. Did you hear the latest one about the two things that are standing in the way of the Antichrist coming? That will wake you up when he talks about Islam and the place of the United States. It is really something. This is father stuff, this is seed sowing, and so far I do not know what the Lord's estimate is going to be finally with the Christian Family Conference over the years, but thank God we got to sow some seeds, and I am so thankful it sowed seed into me, and gave me some kind of vision that there is more going on than meets the eye, my old Baptist eye. I am so thankful for the Lord and His sovereign ruling.

Father, You rule, You rule, the heavens rule. There is no stopping now, the plans that You have for Your Son's glorification and for all things to be brought under Him. There is no explaining, all the mystery that is involved, but Lord we want to see Your vision of Jesus that will keep us running in the race. We want to see some vision of that eternal purpose that will have us singing the Shigionoth. We want to see the beauty of the glorious temple, a greater glory than the former. Oh Lord, we want to see that we are now standing by faith on Mount Zion where all the heavenly resources are at our bidding, and we are part of the life that comes out of that mountain, even the kingdom of God. Oh, thank You, Lord. Thank You for all that we have been given. Oh, help us to be faithful, dear Lord. Help us, Lord. Have mercy on us, Lord. Don't let us waste seed. Help us to be faithful. Thank You, dear Lord Jesus, Amen.