

Open Up

Habakkuk 3:1-2: "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

Let us have a word of prayer:

Dear Lord, we praise You; we come to You before the gracious throne. Lord, may You be present in our midst. Help us to focus upon Thee, Lord. We seek the help of the Holy Spirit of God; I am unworthy sinner before Your presence. Sanctify me, sanctify us that we may glorify Your name. We praise and worship You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

We read the verse in Habakkuk, the prophet. He prays, "Revive thy work. Renew thy work in the midst of the years." So, the newness of the Lord and God we are seeking in the midst of the years, as the years pass by.

"And those who wait upon the Lord (Isaiah 40:31), will renew their strength." And I like the word in the New Living translation, "They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." This word I like very much, "the renewing of strength." When you wait upon the Lord, then you will be strengthened, and you will soar up high.

Before we can know the Lord, we must come into salvation. It would be very difficult to understand the Word of God or to know the Word of God if we have not entered into salvation. Unbelievers cannot understand the Word of God because the god of this world has blinded their minds. They have a lot of questions and doubts in their minds.

One time, the Sadducees came to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they asked many questions about the resurrection. What would happen at the resurrection? Then the Lord Jesus replied to them, "This is the reason you do not know the Scriptures; that is where you go wrong. Neither do you know the Scriptures nor the power of the Lord," He said. So, they did not understand the Word of God. But some of the disciples in the beginning did not understand the words spoken by Jesus Christ; therefore, it was difficult for them to believe in Him. One time, even John the Baptist asked Jesus Christ: "Are You the One to come or do we look for another Person? Are You the One?" Jesus Christ told them, "Blessed is the one who is not offended in Me." So, this was the situation for unbelievers before coming to know the Lord.

When Jesus was resurrected and appeared to the disciples for the first time, they were frightened. They were scared, they were afraid. Then the Lord told them, "Why are your hearts troubled? Why do you have so many doubts?" Then He did one thing to the disciples.

Open Up Our Mind to Understand the Word of God

Luke 24:45: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,"

This is the work of the Lord; He opened their minds. So, we will focus on "open up," the work of the Lord among the disciples and the elderly saints. He opened the minds of the disciples so that they could understand the Scriptures. That is the first thing He did among the disciples. God's

Word is true; we must believe God's Word. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will never pass away (see Isaiah 40:8). The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

God's Word is True

God's Word is true; we must believe the gospel. God's Word is light to show the path. God's Word is a hammer; it softens us. God's Word is a sword; it penetrates our soul and spirit. God's Word is milk; it nourishes us. God's Word is honey; it gives sweetness to our tongue. God's Word is food; it gives us strength. God's Word is like water; it washes us.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1). But it did not stop there. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14a). That was Jesus Christ. So, God's Word and Jesus Christ are the same; they are inseparable. We cannot separate them. "Search the Scriptures," He said. "You think you have eternal life in them; they testify of Me." So, to understand the Word of God, the mind should be opened up. The Lord Jesus Christ did this thing.

A man of God was traveling on a train, and he was reading the Bible. The man next to him saw this and said to him, "I do not believe in the Bible. It is not true." The man of God asked him, "Why?" Then the person told him, "How can a man be inside the belly of a fish?" And the man of God replied, "This is God's Word; it is true." The other man said, "Even if it is written, the fish is inside of the belly of that man, I will believe it." This is God's Word; it is true. May you know the Scriptures and not the power of God. We must believe God's Word. Jesus opened the minds of the disciples.

Open Up Our Mouth to Praise God

The second one: The God of Israel inhabits the praises of Israel. So, praise Him. I will be jumping around in the Scriptures, but I will be focused on the opening up of the things that were done by the Lord.

How do we praise God? What do we need to praise God? We need a mouth to praise God. In Luke 1:64 we see Zacharias, and an angel spoke to him about the birth of John the Baptist. He did not believe the word of the angel, the word of God. Then the angel told him, "You will be dumb until you name your son."

Luke 1:64: "And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God."

When his mouth was opened, he started praising God. Psalm 50:23: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me:" He said.

Praise God

And what is the praise? He is offering up sacrifices continually, which is the fruit of lips. All the creation is praising God. Sometimes we as believers of God, children of God, we do not find words to praise God. Maybe we are disappointed; we do not feel like praising God. We keep quiet

in the presence of God, but the Lord says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." He will give us the words to praise Him. We must praise God, the mighty works of God that He has done.

This morning the brother spoke about Isaiah 6:1. God was sitting on the throne, high and lifted up. When Isaiah saw this vision, he said, "Woe unto me, I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among the people of unclean lips" (verse 5). When he saw the Lord sitting on the throne, he realized he was undone, and his lips were unclean. Then one of the seraphims took a burning coal from the altar and brought it to Isaiah and touched the lips of Isaiah. He told him, "Your iniquities are taken away; your sins are purged" (verse 7b).

Praise God for His Purging and Forgiving Our Sins

When we praise God, how do we know our praises are acceptable to God? Our sins are purged, our sins are forgiven, and our praises are acceptable unto the Lord. What is this altar? It is the cross of Jesus Christ on Calvary, and it is an offering. Through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His blood, our sins are forgiven. God is faithful, and when we confess our sins, He forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

When paint touches my hand, can water wash it? Is it able to wash my hands? No; water cannot wash it away; it needs some special oil, kerosene oil or turpentine oil to wash my hand, or the paint will not go away. When there is sin, only one thing can cleanse us, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ, nothing else. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash the stains of sin. So, to praise God our mouth is to be opened up. To understand the Word of God, our minds are to be opened up, and we use our lips to praise God. Before we come to the Lord, we confess that Jesus is the Lord, we believe the Word in our heart. We confess with our mouth that Jesus is the Lord, that God has raised Him from death, and you shall be saved. Believe in your heart and confess. So, these are the words of how we receive salvation. The first thing is to believe, to understand the Word of God, confess with our mouth, then we shall be saved. Our mouth must be opened up.

Open Up Our Hearts to Worship God

The third thing is to see. So, two things here are opened up, our mind and our mouth. Acts 16:14: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened."

The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, who was a worshipper of God. What do we mean by opening the heart? In Joel 2:13 the Lord says, "Render your hearts and not your garments." In Psalm 51:17 it says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Broken and Contrite Heart

The opening of the heart is a contrite heart, a broken spirit. This is the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had a broken heart. He moved with compassion when He saw the multitude suffering hunger. This is the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "Learn of me, I am meek and lowly. Learn of me; take my yoke upon you."

It was a great thing when our Lord humbled Himself. He was sitting on the highest throne, a glorious God, and He humbled Himself, coming down to the cross of Calvary, where we see the humility of Jesus Christ. We can never understand with our mind because He is a mystery. So, a broken heart is the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, the opening of the heart. What comes out of a broken heart? Unless the seed falls into the ground and dies, it will not come out as a new plant, nor will it bring forth much fruit; it will die. Seed must fall into the ground and die, then it comes out as a plant, and a tree grows. The shell of the seed should break, and when it breaks, sprouts come out. The new life, the new plant comes out. It is the newness of God; the shell will break, and it will die.

In Bethany in the house of Simon, a woman broke the alabaster box of ointment. When it was broken, the room was filled with a fragrance, perfume. What does this symbolize? A beautiful worship comes out of a broken heart. Out of the broken heart we will see beautiful worship to the Lord come out. This is the opening up of the heart.

Release the Spirit of Worship

Watchman Nee in his book, "The Release of the Spirit" explained about the three parts of the human body—the outer part, the inner part, and the innermost part. The outer part is the physical body, the inner part is the soul life, and the innermost part is the spirit life. For the spirit to be released, the outer body and the inner part must be broken, then the spirit can come out. "That is the release of the spirit," he said. When you worship, the spirit of worship is released out from the broken heart. We all know that God is Spirit. They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. So, when the spirit is released, it touches the Spirit of the Lord. It joins them together; they worship together. It communicates together. Then worship is happening in the house of the Lord. The house of the Lord under heaven is joined together. They worship together; it joins with the Spirit of the Lord. Oh, this is the house of God, Bethel. It is none other than the gate to heaven. The house of the Lord is the entrance to the gate of heaven. A beautiful worship comes out from the broken heart; it is opened up. The mind is to be opened up to believe the Word of God, the mouth to praise Him and confess that He is the Lord. A broken heart is a contrite heart, and beautiful worship comes out from the broken heart.

Open Up Our Ears to Hear the Word of God

The fourth one is in Mark 7:34-35a: "And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, be opened. And straightway his ears were opened."

The Lord Jesus Christ opened the ears, "Ephphatha, be opened." How does faith come in? By hearing, only by hearing the Word of God, nothing else. You can hear a lot of things, but you cannot get faith, except by the Word of God. He that has ears, let him hear. So, our ears are to be opened up to hear the Word of God.

Take Heed to Hear the Word of God

In a class the teacher was teaching a lesson to the students back home in India, and the teacher asked a question to the students. "How far will you reach in the lesson?" he asked. Then the student replied, "Everything, the lizard left. When he said this, he was looking at the lizard

passing outside the window. Nothing was going on outside, only the daily stuff. The student that does not hear in the class is like the “body present mind absent.” Our mind is very fast, it can go anywhere very quickly, faster than the speed of light. So, hearing the Word of God is important for the ears to be opened up.

Hear and Do

In Matthew 7:24 the Lord Jesus Christ says, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them.”

Hearing and doing come together; it is not alone. Hearing and the doing are put together. We hear and go and do not do; it is not easy for you. Hear and do both go together. The Lord Jesus Christ says, “Whosoever hears my words and do them, they are wise men. They are like house built on the rock. So, hearing and doing go together.

So before going out of the house, ones will look in the mirror and then go out. If they see a bad spot or something else, they get closer to the mirror and observe it. What is that thing on my face? Can a mirror wash our face? It cannot wash our face, but God’s Word can and does. It shows us our condition, and it also cleanses us. Can anybody see a bad spot on his face in the mirror and then walk away without washing his face? It is not good. When we see something bad, we want to wash it clean, and then we can go out.

Hear and Correct

So, hearing God’s Word and correcting ourselves is an important thing. God’s Word is useful for inspection, for conviction, and for correction. So, hearing and applying God’s Word to us is obedience. Correcting our sins and walking with the Lord is following God; it is discipleship. Hearing and correcting and following the Word of God is discipleship. I want to follow Jesus. “I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back.” This is the man of God. So, this is the opening of the ear.

Mark 7:37: “And the people were astonished, beyond measure, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.” Our Lord Jesus Christ has done all things well.

So, these are the steps we see. First, believe the Word of God, understand the Word of God, confess with our mouth that He is the Lord, worship in truth and Spirit, and then follow the Lord—discipleship.

Open Up Our Spiritual Eyes to See the Unseen

The last thing is the opening of our spiritual eyes. Jonah was inside of the fish’s belly, and he was praying to God. It says in Jonah 2:4: “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.”

He was looking towards the holy temple, and he was praying from inside of the fish’s belly. Normally, how do we pray? We close our eyes and pray to God. Now Jonah was cast far away inside of the fish’s belly, but he was praying, maybe closing his eyes. He was praying to God, but he was far away. And he said, “I am looking towards Your holy temple.” How can he see the holy

temple that was so far away? He saw through his spiritual eyes. He was looking at the temple, God's temple through his spiritual eyes. So, to see the things of God our spiritual eyes need to be opened up.

Elisha Saw the Lord's Army Against Syrian's Army

When the Syrian Army came to take away Elisha, the servant of Elisha came out early in the morning from the house, and he saw the Syrian Army surrounding them. He was afraid and went back inside the house and told Elisha, "What shall we do now? The Syrian Army has surrounded us." Then Elisha said, "Fear not, they that are with us are more than they who are with them." How can Elisha see the things of God but not his servant? Then Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Lord, open the eyes of my servant." Was he blind? The servant was not blind, but still Elisha prayed, "Open the eyes of my servant." The Lord opened his eyes. Now he saw on the top of the mountain the Lord's Army full of horses and chariots of burning fire. Elisha could see the protection of the Lord through his spiritual eyes, but his servant could not. To see the protection of the Lord our spiritual eyes must be opened up.

Disciples on the Road to Emmaus Saw the Lord Jesus

When Jesus Christ was crucified, He died on the cross of Calvary, He was buried and was resurrected. But still the disciples were not able to understand the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had a lot of doubts, a lot of fears in their heart, and they were disappointed. They thought the Lord Jesus Christ would go to Jerusalem and establish His kingdom. But He died on the cross of Calvary, and they were disappointed.

As they were walking on the road to Emmaus, they were talking about the death and the burial of Jesus Christ. They were also talking about a woman who went to the tomb and saw the empty tomb which was opened. They saw the angels who told them that the Lord had risen. "But we do not see His body," they said. They had a lot of questions in their minds, but when Jesus heard these things, He drew near and explained the Scriptures to them. "Don't you know that Christ must suffer like this and enter into the glory?" He explained the Scriptures to them from the prophets, Moses, and others. He spoke with them, then He broke the bread, and their eyes were opened, and they saw the Lord; they knew Him. They saw the resurrected Lord, and their spiritual eyes were opened to the living Lord. Before, they were talking about the dead Jesus; "Jesus was dead, not raised." They had a lot of questions, and they had no hope; it was a hopeless situation. But when their eyes were opened, they saw the resurrected Jesus Christ. Now they had hope, the hope of resurrection. For any man to live on this earth, he needs hope.

Without hope I do not know how we can live; it becomes a hopeless situation. By the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, He has given us this living hope; He has given us the glorious hope. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the glory of hope.

Paul's Ambition

Paul said, "I want to know His resurrection. I want to take part in His sufferings. I want to take part in His death. I want to take part in His resurrection. I want to attain to the power of His resurrection."

In Ephesians he prays, "Enlighten your spiritual eyes that you may know the power of the resurrection of God, which is very, very important to know the power of His resurrection" (see Ephesians 1:18).

Look Off Unto Jesus

So, our spiritual eyes are to be opened up to see the things of God under the resurrection of God, looking unto Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of faith. He endured the cross, despising the shame, and He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Looking unto Jesus is very important to know the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You know that the sunflower turns toward the sun. The way the sun goes, the sunflower turns towards it. It is called Heliotropism. When it sees the sun, it follows the sun. When the sun is not there, the flower goes down, and it will reset itself until the rising of the sun for the next day. It is ready for the next day to receive the power. Our sunflower turns toward the sun. Our Lord is compared to the sun.

Psalm 84:11: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." Our Lord is Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2 says. So, our righteous should be looking unto Jesus, towards Him.

Elisha Kept His Eyes on Elijah

When Elijah was to be taken up, raptured up into the heavens, Elisha, his servant, was following him from Gilgal. Elijah said, "Wait here, pray for me." "No, I will come with you." Then he went to Bethel, there also he said the same thing. Then he went to Jericho, and then he went to Jordan.

What do we mean by Gilgal? Gilgal is "shame rolled away". Gilgal is called "salvation." Then he went to Bethel, "house of God." It is the fellowship of God. Then he went to Jericho, "faith, victory of the Lord." Then he goes to Jordan, "death." He followed from salvation to death. Then, when they crossed the River Jordan, Elijah was taken up into heaven. There was a whirlwind surrounding him and horses and chariots of fire taking him up into heaven. Elisha saw. Did he see the whirlwind surrounding Elijah? or did he see the horses of fire taking him up? Did he see the chariots of fire? No, he was seeing only Elijah. He was not distracted by any of the other things. He was not distracted by the whirlwind, nor by the horses of fire, nor by the chariots of fire. What did he see when he saw Elijah taken up into heaven? He received a double portion of his Spirit. This is what he learned when looking unto Jesus. Our Jesus is the heavenly Elijah. Our eyes are to be fixed onto Jesus Christ who is the Author and Finisher of faith.

Conclusion

So we have this opening up of our mind to understand and believe the Scriptures, the opening up of our mouth to praise Him and confess that He is the Lord, the opening up of our heart to worship Him and have a contrite heart, the opening up of our ears to hear and do the things of God, to follow Him as a disciple, and to open up our spiritual eyes to see the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You and thank You for this time You have given unto us. We honor you and worship You, Lord, as our Saviour and Master. Lord, help us to focus, to see You, looking unto Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of faith. Sanctify this word, bless this word. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.