

## The Whole Counsel of God

We are talking this week on this matter of heavenly vision about two very, very important things. Do you know Him? Do You know Him as He is? As Christians we know a lot about Him, but do you know HIM? And connected with that and necessitating heavenly vision is that we come to understand who we are. These things work in tandem if we are going to come into this matter in a full way. So we want to pray that we will see the Lord. Can you imagine what it must have been like for Stephen in those last moments before he died? As he was being stoned, he looked up to heaven, and he saw the Lord for the first time in glory. Before that, he had probably known Him in the flesh. If you see the Lord in glory, everything gets comfortable inside. He found that charity in his heart to say, "Lord, lay not this charge to these people; they do not know what they are doing, but I know who I am and where I am going." And in these last days we need to know who He is; it is vital. May the Lord help us. Now I have an assortment of Scriptures under the theme of "The Whole Counsel of God," as it were.

Acts 20:27: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."

Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: ..."

Philippians 3:12-14: This is the aftermath of his statement, "I want to know Him. So what am I going to do about it? This is what I am going to do."

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

I would like us to turn to this most wonderful worship moment in Jesus' life while here on earth.

Matthew 11: 25-30: We do not get to hear Him in His prayer life, but here He burst out in a moment of worship.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Abba, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.'"

Genesis 1:1-3: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light."

*Oh, Lord, we cannot imagine what that light was like when sin was absent. Nor can we imagine what light is like in the city of the new Jerusalem, but You have flashed upon us in a lightening flash and revealed Your Son to us, those who are ready to receive. Now we pray tonight that You will grab us all, capture us all, that You will flash upon us even this evening by the Holy*

*Spirit, as we share together the wonderful things of God, that we might know Him and who we are. Thank You for this time. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

What happened in creation in Genesis was paralleled again when Jesus created the new creation. So, I want to start there because when God created the heavens and the earth, He said, "It is good." "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now the heavens and the earth were two distinct things. So, it is not just talking about the sky here. Spiritually, it is talking about God's realm where He comes from, the uncreated realm which has always been there from eternity. There have been angels and creatures, and all of that going around for a long time.

### **God's Creation and Restoration of the Earth**

However, He created the earth at a certain time when He created the universe—the Big God Theory. Boom! And there it was, and it was good.

Now heaven and earth were two different realms, but there was depth in it, correspondence and connection between the two, because with the light of heaven under an open heaven, the earth looked so much different than it does even now. Light was here, and it was good, but when we read verse 2 of Genesis 1, (and you do not have to believe this, but I happen to believe it.) something has happened between verse 1 and verse 2. Now there is darkness over the face of the earth.

In Isaiah 45:18, Isaiah says under the anointing, "God did not create the earth formless and void." Why does it say in verse 2, "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was upon it?" Something had happened, but God had a plan—His eternal purpose.

He said, "You know, My heart's desire is that earth and heaven be recovered and reconnected, and made one." And of course, we know, because we have read the end of the book. It is not that we go up to heaven, it is that heaven comes down to earth and transforms earth from the temporal to the eternal, and this is God's plan: "You know, I am going to connect these two. They have been disconnected, and I am going to reconnect them. Here is what I am going to do; I am going to reform this thing."

God thinks, Jesus speaks, because Jesus is the Word of God. He said, "Let there be light," and the Holy Spirit who is called the hand of God said, "whoosh," and there was light. You know, the Holy Spirit is a real Magician. He waits for Jesus to speak, and when Jesus speaks, we have no idea of the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit that can speak to every heart that is in this room separately tonight and in New Jersey and in the Ukraine. When the Spirit of God's hand moved, He moved quickly, and light came. Then He said, "Okay," and Jesus started speaking. He said, "Okay, let there be water; then let there be trees, and let there be crocodiles;" finally, "let there be man and woman." And God said, "This is very good."

### **Paradise Was a Holy Place with Correspondence to Heaven**

Here is what we want to do. We want to set apart from this darkened place by some cherubim. We will make it a holy place called the garden of Eden; it is Paradise. Why? Because this earth, not heaven, is connected to heaven; it has correspondence with heaven. So, Adam and Eve, once they were created and once, they enjoyed their honeymoon, they started walking around Paradise, and what were they doing? They were talking to God in the afternoon. Why? Because once again heaven is connected to earth. God's goal was to take these created beings,

these men, and what He wants to do is first instruct their spirit because man is spirit, soul and body. So, God said, "I am going to feed their spirits from the tree of life, so their spirits will be developed, and from their spirits their souls would be illuminated. And the illumination of their souls would strengthen their bodies, and that is man." He started in the spirit, then through the soul, and through the body. "That is what I am getting to do."

### **Adam Sinned and Was Casted Out of the Garden**

Of course, the old clod, Adam sinned and cut off correspondence between heaven and earth. God could not walk in the garden anymore. As a matter of fact, those cherubim that were protecting this garden in holiness now had to kick Adam and Eve out and protect them from getting into Paradise where there was correspondence between heaven and earth until something could be done. I cannot imagine what that would be. How can man be reconnected to Paradise, to heaven? How was this possibly going to happen?

Well, the Jews know full well about this, because whenever they built the tabernacle, whenever they built the temple, they built the Holy of Holies and put cherubim there to protect it because this is the symbol of it. They called the Holy of Holies the Paradise of God because there you could meet with God. But there were huge cherubim on the veil, symbolic of, "You cannot get in yet."

### **Jesus Came, and Heaven and Earth Were Reconnected**

Then one day, this man named Jesus went down into the waters of baptism and came out. In the gospel of Mark it says, "And the heavens were rent, and a light beam came down. The Holy Spirit came, and God spoke." Suddenly there was Paradise "Here He is! He is Paradise! And wherever He walked, there was light. He brought light, as it says in Isaiah chapter 9:2. "Into this darkened world wherever He went, there was light." He went to Galilee of the Gentiles, about the darkest place next to New York City. Everywhere Jesus went there was light. People said, "Oh, I feel God. Oh, I hear the truth. Oh, I see a healing. I see life. Look how He loves; look at life. He is the Paradise of God."

Of course, He could not live in Paradise alone because God's plan was to have sons in glory as the eternal companions of His Son, and His Son to reign over this wonderful world that has been given to Him as a gift. But this world needs to be reconciled; this world needs to be saved; this darkness needs to turn to light.

### **Jesus Died on the Cross, and the Veil was Torn**

There is a domain of darkness that must be gotten rid of, and there is mankind that needs to be saved. So, Jesus died on the cross, and lightning struck once again. It tore the veil with the cherubim, and He said, "Come on in all you who believe and are born again. Come with boldness to that throne of grace inside the Holy of Holies and find your Paradise once again upon this earth."

Heaven and earth are two different places, but now we can live in correspondence to heaven even while we live on earth, and this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; this is the heavenly vision. If He had not shown the light, this God of light, this great Creator, this great Recreator, if He had not sent Jesus to say, "I am the light of the world," where would we be excepting in terrible darkness?

But now the church can enter the Holy of Holies, and the church on the outside in the Holy place can be the golden lampstand bearing the revelation of the testimony of Jesus, the light to the world. What a glorious place we live in! Do you live there?

The whole letter to the Hebrews tells us that we only must do two things if we see and understand who Jesus is, and we understand who we are. One, draw near into the throne of grace. You want Paradise? Draw near to the throne of grace. Young child of God, you want Paradise? Draw near to the throne of God, and there you will find grace and mercy to help in any time of need.

The other thing we will have to do, as we understand the whole counsel of God, is to go outside the camp. We want light not darkness, and Jesus is outside the camp full of light, waiting for ones to come. So, this is the background, and when we share heavenly vision, this vision is a matter of light. It is because God is light that He shines upon us.

### **Heavenly Vision Brings Refreshment**

We have these three great vast terms, heavenly vision, whole counsel of God, and eternal purpose. So, for now, for some of you it is just jargon. At least you know where the references are in Scripture because it is in the book, and you have heard it every time. You know where it refers to heavenly vision, and you know where it talks about the whole counsel, and you know where it says the eternal purpose. So at least you got that down. Others are further along than you; they know where to find doctrine. So, it is not just jargon but doctrine; they have come into doctrine. But wait a minute, doctrine does not mean they have seen something, and so we come to this place.

All I know is that when somebody catches the heavenly vision, it is refreshing. Even as our brother said, "There is refreshment here tonight." You know, I had the privilege in my lifetime of attending and working in five Billy Graham crusades, four in the United States and one in Korea. I heard Billy Graham share every one of those times. I helped as a counselor, a couple of times, and in the choir. But you know, Billy Graham shared the same message every time. It was so refreshing, because he was an evangelist. And what do evangelists do? When they speak the gospel, there is life in it. So, every Thursday night it was teenagers and rebellion, maybe changing the words through the generations, but it was the same story, and many of the same Scriptures. Every time, I said, "You know, I could swear, that is the first time I ever heard that one."

Somehow, I do not know how I got roped into this, but I have come to almost fifty of these conferences, and I have been refreshed every time. Sometimes I would come, and Lance Lambert would tickle my innards, and leave some deep impression in my heart. I just could not get rid of it; it was so refreshing. Sometimes Brother Stephen Kaung took me up to the heavens, and I was crying during the whole conference week. And I could say that it was always refreshing. And even this week here under the light of God, there is a refreshment. Oh, I hope you will see the light and enter into a fulness in this conference as we are together.

Now I want to take these three great themes and limit them into a time frame so I can explain something as I am trying to share what I feel the Lord has put in my heart. It is a process, and it begins with that flash from the past, a heavenly vision. When we are born again, and we see the Lord, because no one can see the Kingship of heaven unless you are born again. But when you are born again, believe it or not, it may have been a momentary flash. "What did I see? I do not

know, it happened so fast.” But you saw something that brought you from death to life. That is the heavenly vision from the very first moment it flashed in your life sometime in the past for most of you.

But then the whole counsel of God is speaking about the present because having received that holy flash of vision from heaven, it is now time for a foundation building which happens by the Word of God and the whole counsel of God, which is where we will talk tonight. And the next time I speak, if we haven’t been all transfigured and transported, I would like to share on the eternal purpose of God from the future side of how it keeps us. I guess you would say we are caught in the first stage of heavenly vision, now we are apprehending the whole counsel of God in the second, and then we are kept by His eternal purpose at the end.

### **Everyone Born Again Has Received Heavenly Vision**

Now we began with the heavenly vision, and we used Charles Wesley’s beautiful hymn, “And Can It Be?” You remember how he said, “There I was lying in a dark dungeon in the night, and then Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,” which means, your eye sent out an enlivening unless you know what quickening means; it is coming alive light. He said, “Let there be light,” and that person comes alive.” And Charles Wesley said, “On that day I came alive, and I looked around, and the whole dungeon was filled with light. It was like a great lightning storm came and filled this whole place with light, and in my jail, I saw the chains come off, and I was free. I left that jail to follow the Lord in the heavenly vision.” That is a wonderful hymn that we sang as we spoke about that.

Now we are in the present tense, and again my burden has always been this matter of recovering the church in these last days into a prophetic testimony of Jesus, and that necessitates vision. Now to illustrate my point of this first stage of the heavenly vision, I want to sneak back into Lucio’s territory of the early church in Acts after the day of Pentecost, just to make a kind of simple point. Did they see a heavenly vision there on the day of Pentecost? Had the 120 seen a heavenly vision who saw Jesus alive from the dead? And even some of them who saw Jesus being lifted into heaven, surely, they saw a heavenly vision; they did see something.

How about the three thousand that got saved that day? Peter was preaching the gospel, they repented of their sins, they were baptized, they received forgiveness, and now they were in the kingdom of God. But had they seen the heavenly vision through Peter’s message? What did they see? I bring that up because we have to ask the question for everyone here who has been born again. Now have you seen it or not? Think about that for just a minute.

Did the heavenly vision capture those initial 3,000? We know the three disciples, Peter, James and John, went upon the mountain and saw Majestic Glory. I think they saw a vision, and they were totally captured. But how about the rest of these guys? Now we have to say this. Most of these people in Jerusalem had seen Jesus according to the flesh, but to repent and take Him as their Savior and Messiah and Lord means that they had seen something more of Jesus than just Jesus who was in Jerusalem a few weeks ago. They had seen something. Was that a heavenly vision? Let’s talk about this.

They became partakers of the heavenly calling. That is what the book of Hebrews said: “Partakers of a heavenly calling.” We are on the earth, but we are marching upwards to Zion in some kind of way. They did not use the term in the book of Acts, “heavenly vision,” but you could

see a redirection in their lives, couldn't you? Why? Because they had repented and come to the cross, confessed their sins and came to a new Lord. Imagine calling Jesus Yeshua and Yahweh. That is consequential to a Jew, that is for sure.

As a result, did they see a heavenly vision? As a result, they lived an inexplicable life. They began to live full of joy, full of love, full of fellowship and sharing with one another. Life and light permeated their existence together in the church whether they were at the temple hearing Peter speak about Jesus or whether they were in homes going from home to home, it was light everywhere they seemed to go. And the reason we can say that is because their opponents came up with the term early. They did not call them the church. What did they call them? "Disciples of the way," because when they looked at these Christians, they were marching to a different drummer. They were walking in a way that the rest of the Jews were not walking. Nobody else was walking this way. What was going on in their lives? They were walking, they had acquired this holy Spirit, and I sensed these spiritual instincts in their lives. It had them understanding by the anointing that which is true, that which is false, that which is life, and that which is deadly. It was like, let me just call it for the moment, it was spiritual instinct that they had.

### **They Had and Lived by Spiritual Instincts**

Now remember the context. First, they had no New Testament. There were no gospels to read, no epistles to explain the doctrines of God. There was no revelation, which is the book of Revelation had not been given at that time. And nobody had heard of these terms, the body of Christ, crucified with Christ, seated in the heavenlies with Christ. These are things that came much later, didn't they? Coming up to Mount Zion, they had never heard the Roman Road of Salvation. How many know the Roman Road? They never heard that they were no longer in Adam; they were in Christ, they had not heard that yet. They had not heard the road to glory, which is Romans 8:28, where you had been foreknown and predestined, and you had been called, justified, and glorified. They did not know any of that. That is the kind of stuff we love, right? That is why everybody says, "It's all good." They distort Romans 8:28 completely.

Now listen, other than the apostles there were no church positions. There were no church janitors, so everybody had to clean up. That is the most important position in any church, and we know that. They did not have those church positions. Who is this apostle, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons. All they had was "diakonos" which they picked out in Acts chapter 6 which means servants, and we now call them deacons. "Diakonos" just mean servants; it did not have a fancy title like deacons as did the Major Wake Forest Deacons, who are the Deacons in the Atlantic Coast Conference. In Wake Forest College, they call them the Demon Deacons. Don't go to that school; think about it.

These people did not go to church. There was no building, yet they met every day if it was possible. It continued steadfastly. They met at the temple when they had the chance, or they met from home to home every night they could get away from work. And they did not have select meetings; Thursday night was prayer meeting, Tuesday night was Bible study, Sunday we break bread. No, you know what they did. They came together, and the Lord led. They just came together and had life. Sometimes an apostle was there, and he talked about Jesus, and somebody got saved while he was talking. Then somebody got healed by a brother who went over to him and prayed for him, then they had a wonderful worship time, then they had dinner and broke bread together. Afterwards they just fellowshiped for a while, and somebody pulled out from



the trunk of their Volkswagen some old shoes or other things and gave them around. That was their life; then they went home. Was that a prayer meeting? Well, they prayed a lot. Was it a worship time? Well, they sure worshipped, but they did not call it that: "We got together; we had some instincts; and it made us want to continually be together."

They did these kinds of things. There were no seminars on witnessing. There was no marriage counseling, there was no dealing with the strong-willed child seminar, which most parents have been to once or twice. There was no psychological counseling, no Christian Schools, but the Lord was adding daily such as should be saved. Even that seemed so automatic that only Jesus could get credit for that. Yet without knowing any of those things, they lived as if they understood all these doctrines. They submitted to Christ, to one another, they lived in one accord, they fellowshiped, and they sensed Jesus' presence whenever they gathered. They were disciples of the heavenly way. They had a goal, a direction, a testimony, and a whole-hearted devotion to the Lord—first love.

Now what is the point I am trying to make? I am making an important point because I know that the church soon got into trouble. Sin was a problem, ambition was a problem, pride was a problem, false teachers were a problem. What did that mean? They are going to need a Bible. They are going to need the doctrines; they are going to need the epistles and the gospels. So, my point is that we do not need that stuff. No, the simple point was this: Jesus was the light of the world, and He shone upon them, and there was something that allowed them to live by these spiritual instincts in the very beginning. And may I say that the way they lived was much fuller of life than what we have today. Now that should shame us just a little bit.

But I want to say this, God wants you to exercise your spirit, and the early church began to understand what is right and what is wrong in here. Before they were given a list of rules, (In the back of my Baptist Hymn Book there are rules of a good Baptist, and the way they lived.) they did not have that Baptist Hymn Book yet; they knew what was right from wrong. They had spiritual instincts, and the Lord was exercising their spirit. The Holy Spirit had come into their spirit and they were alive in spirit, and they were beginning to understand in their mind and soul and emotions that which instinctively they knew by that Spirit which was called in I John, which is the wonderful letter regarding recovery—the anointing.

Oh, the Christians were aware of the anointing within them, how they would be saved from so much trouble. And if we lived obeying that spiritual instinct, how wonderfully we would be eating from the tree of life.

### **We are Born Again and Received Heavenly Vision**

But let's get back to a vital point that I want to make, and it is this. Everyone who has been born again and knows Jesus, the Son of God, has seen the light. You have received heavenly vision, in meniscal form, but your spirit needs to develop that. You have seen a shaft of light that has given you life. Listen to what John says, and he is so careful about this.

I John 5:11-12: "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; ..."

Now how did you get that? By repentance or when you were twelve years old as a child you prayed. Was it some great flash of light or just some kind of settling of forgiveness of sin? It makes no difference; If you have the Son, you have Zoe, eternal life. If you have the Son, whether a great experience, whether a quiet experience, it does not make any difference. the question is, how

great your experience is having nothing to do with it, “Do you have the Son?” That is the testimony, “I have the Son,” Then there is life. We must start with that raw material, or any kind of doctrines as the whole counsel of God will only deaden us, not give us light.

So, we abide in the Lord, and the Holy Spirit abides in us. Seeds have been planted for fuller vision. How about those of you who were raised in a Christian family? You had a quiet conversion; there were no dungeons of darkness and death like happened in my life. You have been attending Christian Family Conferences for years, growing up in a Christian place. How about you? Do you have a heavenly vision? Or as our Brother Lucio pointed out so wonderfully. Vision does not necessarily mean you saw something. As a matter of fact, what Paul calls heavenly vision was when he went blind. His vision was that he heard something, a voice calling, “Saul, Saul.” So maybe your vision was not an eyeball vision: “I saw the Lord high and lifted up.” No, no, no; maybe you heard a voice. Maybe you could not even recognize the voice, but there was something inside, there was a knowing, and that is how the vision began.

Maybe there was a redirection of your will, and you knew a calling in your life; you sensed Him calling you. You cannot even describe it. You would not even call it a vision; but it was a vision. You see, a vision is, as our Brother Lucio said, “a revelation.” Whether it comes to our mind, whether it comes to our will, however it comes, a light comes in, and redirects us, and it gives us life.

So, the first thing I want to say, because I do not want anybody here to say, “Ah, well, these guys are talking about vision, but I was never on the road to Damascus. I never saw a blinding light.” But if you saw Jesus, if you know Jesus, you have seen heavenly vision. So, I do not want anybody to escape. If you are saved, you have seen something. And tonight, we are going to talk about what you have to do about it.

### **Kept in the Light of that Heavenly Vision**

It is a great mystery, but John makes it clear again in another passage. In I John 1:5 he makes it clear how we keep that heavenly vision, how we are kept in the light of that heavenly vision, and this is the message. Now John wrote a letter, and he put a lot of stuff at the beginning. John always waffles off into all kind of mystical things, but he finally comes back in verse 5 and says, “Oh, yes, I forgot; this is the message now that God wants me to tell you.”

I John 1:5-10: “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

### **They Continued Steadfastly in Fellowship**

The early church received the heavenly vision, and now I am going to tell you how they kept living in this life. You see, they did not just have life; they lived life. How did they live in the life in those early days when they had no doctrines, no Bibles or anything? How did they walk in the



light? It was because they had fellowship with one another, and they continually were guarded and helped and protected by fellowship with other brothers and sisters in the body of Christ who also were under the Headship of Christ. We have such a devalued fellowship that in my old church fellowship was the hall downstairs where you went to get cookies and cool aid after a meeting. But fellowship, giving and taking and sharing of life, one with another, was how they kept together and doing what was right. When somebody started going wrong, immediately they began getting out of the light. So, they said, "Brother, I must pray for you; you are going out into darkness, so stay in the light. There is infidelity there, adultery there; no, no, no! You want to stay in the light?" "Yes, I want to stay in the light." "Come back in; let's pray: Lord, forgive us our sins." "Ah, we are back in the light."

They came to crises in that early time, but when they came to a crisis, "what should we do? The Greek-speaking widows are not being fed. What should we do?" "What should we do?" "What should we do?" And finally, Peter said, "You know, we are fellowshiping together, why don't you guys find seven guys." They found them, and they became the deacons.

And then, "My goodness! What is going on? We just heard a report that Gentiles are being saved." "Oh, no, God forbid! What are we going to do? What are we going to do? Let's pray for it. Let's pray for it. Let's pray about it." "Oh, Lord, do You want Gentiles to be saved? Wait a minute, which can't be right." Then somebody said, "You know, I happen to be reading in the Scriptures the other day where Isaiah said that Jesus will also save the Gentiles." What!!!!!! They had fellowship, right?

Then Peter and John got thrown into prison. "Oh, what are we going to do? What are we going to do?" They got just as fussed up as our prayer meetings when something bad goes wrong. The best prayer meetings are when something bad goes wrong. That is when we all get worked up. "Oh, what are we going to do? What are we going to do? I do not know." Well let's pray: "Oh God, do a miracle, please help us. Let Peter and John be somehow helped."

Even when Peter was in prison, they were praying so hard that when he knocked on the door, they were still praying. All of that was because they lived together in a fellowship that kept them in the light. If you walk in the light as He is in the light, you have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from all sin. Now who is perfect here and does not need that? Oh, the church kept us together in real fellowship. I do not care what church name it is; it is just to be in that kind of fellowship in the light. This was the key to that early church as they were beginning to abide together and live together.

Some saw a vision of the Lord, and there is always some mystic in every group. They are usually no good to man or anybody, but they always see mystical visions. But somebody saw a vision of the Lord in the group; praise God for that! But others said, "I did not see a vision of Jesus, but you know when that sister was praying, I heard the Lord's voice." "You know, I did not see the Lord, but that guy was confessing his sin, and man, the Holy Spirit really convicted me of my sin in that time of fellowship."

Some of them said, "Well, I found in Jesus, forgiveness." And another one said, "I found peace." Others said, "Man, in my life I sensed such cleansing after I repented." Somebody else said, "Oh, I felt the love of God just warming up my whole body." Somebody else said, "Oh, I felt the calling in my life; I want to do what I saw that prophet doing. I feel God wants me." So, they began to start with the gift of prophecy. All of this was going on because in fellowship they saw Jesus among the brethren, and their spirit responded. It is such a vital stage.

## **The Whole Counsel of God is a Foundation**

But now that we have a living spirit, our spirit is alive, and the Holy Spirit is affecting our spirit. He is anointing, He is leading, and giving us these instincts. Now we need the whole counsel of God to have a foundation. How many of you know if you live only by spiritual instinct eventually you will go off the rails. And some Christians went off the rails believing Jesus was God but not Man or Man but not God or this or that. There is all that kind of stuff, so we need a foundation, the whole counsel of God, so that we can really know Him, and we can really know ourselves.

That is why I would like for us to read Ephesians 2:19-20 as we review words that have already been spoken, but here Paul says this:

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the foundation stone,”

Do you see what we need to be founded on? It is the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner stone. So, the apostles’ teachings were so, so important. Not only did they continue steadfastly in fellowship, but they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teachings. Now we must be clear about this. This is where our soul-heavy, mind-heavy, heavy-doctrine, church has gone astray. The apostles’ teaching was the apostle’s teaching, singular. All twelve apostles may have preached, but they all preached the one apostolic doctrine because they preached Christ, whether it was Matthew, or Peter, or James. Their message was a revelation of Christ which was building a foundation in those lives that had been awakened in their spirit and now needed to understand in their soul what was going on. Mind you, it was one teaching. They were built upon the foundation of the apostles’ teaching, singular.

## **The Foundation of the Apostles’ Teaching is Singular**

What am I saying? There was no reformed teaching, no Pentecostal teaching, no evangelical preaching, no faith teaching, no prosperity teaching, all these doctrines that are bandied about today. They did not have post-tribulation, pre-tribulation; they had Jesus-tribulation. If you were to ask those people, what was Peter talking about? What did he teach? Well, he shared about how Jesus said, “It is better to give than to receive.” Now that is not very deep. “But I want a book at least if David Peng gets printed out from the library. My mind is hungry for more knowledge, yeah.”

I know that Peter was cleverer than you realize. So was Matthew, so was John, but these guys were not rocket scientists; but they had seen Jesus. So, you go to Solomon’s porch, and here are three thousand Christians listening to the testimony. The guy gets up and says, “Jesus was walking one day,” and somebody said, “What is the kingdom of God like?” And he said, “You know what it is like? It is like treasure hidden in the field, and a man found it and sold everything to get it.” People said, “Hey, that is the kingdom.” Jesus handed out kingdom hors d’oeuvres, and so the apostles would just share one hors d’oeuvre and then start walking. People were hungry for more because when any teaching is a Christ-centered teaching, it is a living teaching; it is a spiritual teaching. So, they had teaching of the Word of God, and their foundation was built.

### **Exercise Your Spirit to Know Him Intimately**

When the Word of God began to be formed, the New Testament had not yet been written. The Holy Spirit came along just as promised and said, “He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak about Himself, but wherever He hears about Me, He will speak, and He will glorify Me, and He will take of Mine and disclose it to you.” But you must come before the Holy Spirit and ask Him. Your spirit needs to be exercised: “Lord, what do you like? Lord, what are You doing? Lord, who are You?” Your spirit can touch the Lord. Your Spirit can know the Lord from the moment you are saved. Don’t tell me you do not know the Lord.

But you have heard so much about Him, and some of that is like the series, “The Chosen.” That is a great series; people really loved that series, but that is not really Jesus; I mean it is sort of. And that is the problem with a lot of Christian teaching; it is all sort of. I mean, if you actually saw Jesus, do you think He looks like that guy who is playing Jesus? There is something in Jesus’ eyes that penetrates your soul. There is something much more serious than just lovey-dovey Jesus, although Jesus is full of love as well. So, I am not going to say any more about “The Chosen.” If you are into this series, fine. There are really some wonderful things that they do in that show, I think, although I do not watch it.

But listen; what I am trying to say is this: “Meet the real Jesus.” Now if you walk away from that, you may think you know Jesus because you have seen “The Chosen,” but you have seen a Hollywood version of Jesus. Some of them may be closer, some of them not so close, but that’s my point. The Holy Spirit will lead us through the whole counsel of God.

### **The Understanding of the Lord Jesus Grew Exponentially**

As these apostles taught, their understanding of who Jesus was grew exponentially just from the instinctive things; He is Lord; He is my King. And exponentially they began to see as the apostles taught, and they received revelation themselves. So, it was like the more they taught, the more they received of the whole counsel of God. They began to see that they had to move the camera back from their former position of seeing Jesus like this because now Jesus had gotten bigger. So, they said, “I have this copy of the gospel of Mark that he wrote, and somebody gave it to me.” It says, “He was the Servant and the Messiah, the Son of God.” They said, “Oh, praise God.” And someone else said, “Wait, I just got something from Matthew, and he said, ‘He is the King and Messiah, the kingdom of God, and his story started back with Abraham.’” They said, “Oh, praise God; Move the camera back, Mel.”

And just as they were getting their focus, Luke comes back with another gospel and says, “Wait a minute, He is the Son of God that goes all the way back to Adam. He is God’s Son from Adam.” Oh, move the camera back; this goes all the way back in genealogy to when they first met. Then John comes along and says, “Before there was any men, there was the Logos.” “Move the camera back, we need a wide-angle lens. This Jesus is growing; He is getting bigger.” And of course, Paul came along and blew the whole thing out of the water: “Do you not see that it was seen by revelation?” There is that wonderful phrase where it says, “Having been rooted and grounded in love, seeing together the length and width and height and depth, and to know the love of God.”

Most people assume that this is talking about the dimensions of the love of God, and the love of God has great dimensions. There is only one good thing that has greater dimensions than the love of God, and that is Christ Jesus.

If you go back and read Lightfoot's Commentary on Ephesians, you will see, but the basic point is what Paul is saying is that together we discover the length, width, height and depth of Christ Jesus Himself. He is bigger than you thought.

But notice how we do that—together. So, if I go and lock myself in my room and say, "Jesus, I want to see the full 3D version, 15 millimeters. What size do they make movies now? 70 Millimeters? Let me see a huge screen of Jesus, all by myself. You know, all you will be able to see is a little tiny thing, something like an I Phone Version, just a kind of split little thing.

Now if you get together with saints and fellowship in the light, and see more light, Jesus is mighty big, as big as Paul, who at the end, was saying, "I am still climbing the mountain. I have not seen all of Christ yet, but I am heading up there. My spirit is getting bigger. I am eating from the Tree of Life; I am not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We will see the next time the damage that does in the Christian life.

They started out in the light and saw more light, but all of the theological movements today are small, are petty. Do you think man's mind can really figure out all this stuff? Calvin was a great man of God. He saw great things, but any Calvinist is betting on the wrong stuff. You need to be a Jesusist. We need to hold to the teaching of Jesus.

### **Hold to the Teaching of Jesus**

Pergamos was a Church severely reprimanded by Jesus when He said, "You are holding to teachings; I never told you to hold on to teachings. I told you to hold on to the Head; that is Me. Why are you holding on now to the teaching of Baal? Or the teaching of the Nicolaitans? Why have you gone astray?" I am not trying to shoot down Calvinists because John Calvin saw so much, and there is so much in Calvinism that is absolutely beautiful. But when you take those kinds of revelations and then turn them into philosophical speculation, they get unreasonable as does Arminian, as does Pentecostalism, as does any other theology. These are just theologies thought out at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man is taking a revelation and then tries to speculate on what all that means. So, we have to say, "Has Jesus predestined everything?" Amen! "And do you have free will?" "Amen; I will take that on." Your mind is too small for that, just hold on to the old things.

But the important thing is that we come to a crossroads in our lives. Up to this time, we have received vision from the Lord, and instinctively our spirit has grown as we have eaten from the Tree of Life. We have had fellowship one with another, and it has kept us in the light, and this is wonderful.

### **Pursue the Lord Who Has Caught You**

Now something must happen. There must be a change in us. You see, heavenly vision comes to us totally by grace. How many deserve the heavenly vision? You knew it was by grace. And why did the lightning strike? It was by grace, by His mercy He opened your eyes. The flame of light set you alive, and you have been saved. How wonderful that grace of God! All you could do is receive it, but now that that has happened, the life within you wants to respond with what is called in pursuing "that which caught you." Now that is not abnormal; that is normal. A person who has

met the love of their life is going to go find them out. And we who have seen just a glimpse of Jesus you understand why Paul is saying, "I do not know what you care about, there is one thing that I do. I saw and I am going to get Him." You see, the prize that Paul was talking about is that "I may know Him. I know Him in the power of His resurrection, I have known Him in the fellowship of His suffering, I do not know Him quite in the glory yet, but I am climbing up that mountain because I want to see."

It is just like Moses going up on the mountain wanting to see the glory of God. When you see something, aren't you attracted? Are you so selfish or afraid or whatever, that you will not pursue? But if you do not pursue, you can never grow because you grow by pursuing. So, you become a student of the Word of God, but you want to read the Word of God under the flash of the Holy Spirit and not just as some kind of doctrinal thing. It is easy to read wonderful books and come away with doctrines, but there is no life within it. And how wonderful when we become those pursuers who are pressing.

### **Paul's Experience**

Imagine this: Paul saw that heavenly vision on the road to Damascus, and it was just the beginning for him of a life of pursuing to know more of Jesus. Just think about that! What he went through in his life! He saw that heavenly vision, and he was completely blinded. He had no idea what had happened to him except he met Jesus, that Shekinah Glory, and "what do I do about it?" Then, of course, Ananias, that faithful disciple, came and said, "The Lord told me to come and heal you and to fill you with the Holy Spirit, and send you to the Gentiles." That is when Paul heard that he was supposed to go to the Gentiles. And that little Ananias, that faithful Jew, who had been saved by the Messiah, came and told Paul that.

"What! No, no, that cannot be right, an apostle to the Gentiles! No, no, no, I am a Jew." So, God said, "Okay, Paul, your first adventure is two years in the wilderness. Oh, take your Bible with you." He went out into that wilderness of Arabia, and he went before Mount Sinai, and he reread the Old Testament in the light of Jesus. That is how he understood why he was to be an apostle to the Gentiles because Abraham was to be a blessing to the Gentiles. And Abraham would bear one seed who would be a father to all of faith, whether Gentile or Jew. You see, as he read the Old Testament out there in the desert, he saw Jesus in the Old Testament.

Can you imagine what Barney thought when Paul came back and said to Barney? "Oh, I have had so many revelations; let me tell you about them. I saw that I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. I saw that from over here." And Barney said, "What! Down in Jerusalem we are still offering sacrifices at the temple." Paul had been out there at the mountain for a couple of years and saw that he was a new creation in Christ. He saw that he was no longer in Adam; he was in Christ. He saw a lot of things by reading the Old Testament in the new light that he had.

But then God said, "That's great you spent time in the desert, now go back to Tarsus." Now you know what happened back there where he was from." The apostles saw Paul after he came back from Arabia and said, "This guy is dangerous. He is going to get killed. We better send him back to his hometown." And guess what happens in your hometown. That is where you learn the cross. My mother always said to me (I was born in Brooklyn) "You may have been bread in Brooklyn, but you are only a crumb here." Whenever I got too uppity you know. Big guy!

"Alright Paul, you are a Pharisee of the Pharisees, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, go back to Tarsus where you are Saul of Saul, the tent maker who does not actually need a do-good needle.

And you are going to have to learn that your old man must die, you must submit to your parents, you must submit to the brothers in the meeting who cannot read. I am going to teach you the cross, Paul. So, spend a little time in Tarsus, be knocked down a few pegs, realize that your old man has been crucified, and realize that you are a new man in Christ." Somewhere Paul died, and I think it was in Tarsus. (This is my idea.)

Then Barnabas went up and got him because he was such a nice guy. Barney went up to Tarsus, got Paul, and said, "You have to get back to Antioch; there is stuff going on." And boy, Paul came back there, and lights went on because he had super revelation, and the Gentiles were being saved and the Jews, and they found themselves one together. And Paul was teaching and prophesying, and Barney was preaching and prophesying, and that was all set up for him going off.

It was the first time he ever heard, "Paul, you are an apostle; I am sending you out with Barnabas, but you are under Barnabas Saul. You are still just a crumb here." He went out as an apostle under Barnabas and started that first missionary trip. You see, his whole life was an adventure where he understood more and more about Jesus, and after a while it became apparent that every time he spoke to the Jews he got trouble, and every time he spoke to the Gentiles, they got saved by the truck loads. How can you fight God? He said, "You know, I wish I could be an apostle to the Jews. All I can do is hope that the Jews get jealous when they see my God, the Messiah. I cannot do anything with them. That is why You sent Apollos out. He went out, and immediately Jews got saved." Paul had his limits you know.

One day God said, "You know, Paul, I made you a steward to the Gentiles," and how did He say that? It was in that meeting together with James and Peter who gave him the right hand of fellowship and said, "Now, you are a steward to the Gentiles, and we are stewards of the Jews." He started stewarding that mystery he had discovered somewhere back when the Christ was revealed in him. He said, "Christ was revealed in me that I might preach to the Gentiles this wonderful mystery that Christ is in you. It is the hope of glory, you Gentiles."

What I am trying to say is that from the time he was saved to the time he went to prison; he saw more things. When you read the prison epistles, he never spoke of the heavenlies until he saw a new revelation of that while he was in jail. He started speaking about fulness, which was not a major theme for him. But in Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians there was fulness, fulness, fulness. He kept seeing more about what Christ was doing and what Christ had done, and all of this is the whole counsel of God, a continuing expansion of revelation of truth regarding Jesus Christ. And the more somebody received this revealed truth into their lives, the more they were founded upon a foundation which is sure and true.

### **Be Thou My Vision**

So now here is the point we are at. Whatever state you are in, you have seen the Lord. if you want to grow and come into this whole counsel of God, you must pursue the Lord; pursue His Word, by faith pursue the Lord. You must come to God and say, "I want to know You. I wish to live in the light, not just in the shadows." God is always searching for somebody who says, "I want to come; I want to seek first the Kingship of God and His righteousness." Oh boy, the Lord loves to hear that, but you have to say that by faith. The grace of God and the love of God needs to rise in your heart, and you say, "I want it."



Here is my point. We can sing wonderful songs. My wife's favorite hymn may be, "Be Thou My Vision," and we sing it together. We were singing good tonight. I even got goosebumps; the singing was so good. Now here is the question. "Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my heart." Well, is He? Now when you sing that, do you say by faith, "Yes, Lord, please be my vision. Oh, Lord, You are the Lord of my heart." What do I mean by that? "Naught be all else to me save that Thou are."

What is He saying? I want nothing else but You. Are you just singing that because You happen to like the tune, or did you make that your own when you said that line? "Not be all else to me save what Thou art." Then he goes on: "Thou my best thought by day or by night." All the television I am watching, all the stuff I am doing, is my best thought Jesus by day or by night?

I do not know about you, but I moved into a strange bed. I have a long time at night when I am awake. What is my best thought? "Oh, man, I am tired. Jesus, are You still with me by day or by night, waking or sleeping? Amen to that." "Thy presence my light." Are you pursuing the Lord? Are you coming into His whole counsel? It takes something; and the Bible often speaks about this.

In Jeremiah 29:12-13: "Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

It is not just occasionally: "Ah, Jesus, You know, I heard a great message tonight. Sometime when it is convenient to me and I am not looking at Tic Toc, would You reveal Yourself to me?" "I will wait a little while. I will wait until they take your phone away when you go to school." All I am saying is that "when you seek for Me with all your heart, and then He says, "I will be found by you," it is like a little game of tag. The Lord wants to reveal Himself to you, but if you are not interested, He is not going to play games with you. But if you want to be found, He will find you. If you ever see a mom playing a game with two little kids, and the mom can hide any place she wants, and the kids cannot find her. The mom goes, "yoo-hoo, yoo-hoo." The kids finally come over, and she says, "Oh, you found me." But what if the kid just strayed off and went out to the yard, and mom is in the cupboard for half an hour. Now how would she feel?

How does the Lord feel when you cannot even come to Him in the morning? Please, He is waiting right there by your chair to meet with you with a heart full of love, and you never showed up. You just got busy. That is why I read that little verse. It is a challenge to us because there were those who were accusing Jesus of all kinds of things. And as a result of His worship, in Matthew 11 He said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned."

Sometimes we are so smart, and we know so much that God hides, and He reveals Himself to babes. Look at the disciples, Peter, James, John and Andrew, all those guys were babes. They had no idea how big God was, but they were simple babes who were walking and obeying and listening to Jesus. Jesus says, "That is all I want. Will you take up My yoke and learn from Me, babe? I will reveal all kinds of amazing things." "Come to Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Don't be such a smarty pants. I know that some of us can quote doctrines about these matters of eternal purpose and heavenly vision, and I think sometimes that really stands in our way. Sometimes like a babe we need to keep coming back and say, "Lord, help us, help us."

### **Shrinking Back**

Just think about this one phrase: “I did not shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God.” Now why on earth would he say, “I did not shrink back”? Because the whole counsel of God involves things that people do not like, such as the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A famous old Baptist pastor named Stephen Olford told me, “I can preach sermons on anything, and he was a great preacher from England. He said, “As soon as I preach on the Lordship of Christ, people shut down.” Or the whole counsel of God is the cross that is going to break us and let that light that is within us come out. I shrank not back from telling you that.

### **Spiritual Warfare**

But there is even more. The Ephesian Church was born amid spiritual conflict. They were under Artemis which was the great spiritual principality over that city in Ephesus. Do you know what it was like to make spiritual progress in Ephesus? Every step you took you must overcome the spiritual oppression of Artemis and her great temple, which was one of the seven wonders of the world at that time. The whole atmosphere was full of this dark, sexual goddess over that city, but they fought their way through. They burned the magic books, and people got saved. Oh, there was a lot of deliverance. It was spiritual warfare; that is the whole counsel of God.

Brothers and sisters, if you want to make progress, you are going to have to learn that spiritual warfare Paul talks about in Ephesians 6. It is not a playground. “I shrank not back from telling you this. For two and a half years I was there crying with you, praying with you, fighting with you, and going through all those battles because I shared the whole counsel of God.” And the whole counsel was the dealings that God was having with the Jews because they rejected the Messiah. No wonder people were trying to kill me because I said, “You can come and be saved through Christ Jesus without being circumcised. That alone put a death count on me. But I shrank not back from talking about these kinds of things.”

“If you are faithful to Me, the world will not like you; the world will oppose you, and you will face adverse circumstances in the world. Now I am sharing with you the whole counsel of God.” As the Hebrews said, “By now you should be teachers, but instead you want the little milk of the Word. Can I just get the “a’s,b’s,c’s”? Jesus loves me, this I know.” It is absolutely true, but if we are going to go on and come into the whole counsel of God, there is a walk of faith that is costly.

Paul said, “You know, brothers, I did not take your money, and I shared with you the whole counsel of God. Some of that stuff was hard to swallow. But I said, ‘Do not lay anymore of those foundations of beginning stuff; it is time to come into maturity. It is time to understand your position, to put your whole trust in Jesus Christ, to draw nigh into His throne where there is grace and mercy. Don’t count on anybody else.’” “Well, I am following somebody’s teaching.” Oh, you are in trouble. Follow the Lord, and as He enlightens people in their teaching, praise God. If you are following the Lord, He is your all-sufficiency. He is the whole counsel of God that brings people into a true maturity.

### **He Dwells with Those with A Contrite and Lowly Spirit**

I want to make one final encouragement. Having said all of that, and scared the wits out of some of you, here is the final thing I want to say. For some reason which I do not know, the Lord loves the flashes that capture those who are broken, weak, needy, afraid and lonely. Why is God

like that? There are all the big shots that He could capture. Wouldn't it be wonderful if He really captured Trump by big names? Just lonely, broken, messed-up people, questioning people, poor old doubting Thomas, those who are weak, those who are broken. He says, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with those of a contrite and lowly spirit, so I can revive their spirit, and they can be kept spirit, soul and body."

I wonder if you could make the case that those people in the Old Testament who really pursued the Lord, did it have some kind of a compensation for their brokenness? Jacob ran away, and I think part of it is because his dad always said, "You are nobody. Here is my guy, Esau. Now there is a son." "Jacob, what, do you like, making porridge?" So, Jacob went away. I mean, your dad telling you are nobody. That gets you out under the stars, but God said, "I have not forgotten you, Jacob; Jacob whom I loved. I know you are broken, and all messed up. You have a father complex, but you did cheat on your dad, and you did cheat on Esau, and I still love you."

And there was David and all those seven kids that Jesse loved. Then there was David, the little rascal. "I never cared for little red-headed kids; send him out there in the field to take care of the sheep because we have the boys at home. He eats salad." They sent David out into the field to be a shepherd to get him out of the way. But under the sky he met the Shepherd of heaven.

I think sometime some of these famous guys were compensating for something, maybe brokenness, some need they had. I think we all compensate because there is something broken, something we need, and it brings us to the Lord. The Lord delights in that, as He says, "The strong, the proud, the confident need not apply." God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

So, to you of those who are broken, maybe you feel you do not have much heavenly vision, and I am not sure of myself or anything. Let me say something: you are not holding on to Him; He is holding on to you, and He is going to keep you. It is because He looks into your heart, and He can see what is really there despite exteriors. So do not be afraid of whole-hearted consecration and pursuing of the Lord: "Come to Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden."

Then there is just that simple final phrase in Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Dear old Andrew Crouch, who was one of the most precious brothers in the Christian world of music. I loved that brother, and if you knew more about his life, you would realize how precious he was. He never made much money because he gave a lot of money away. He was famous. My Tribute: "How can I say thanks to God be the glory." He wrote all kinds of songs. Just before he died, he took that Hebrews 13:5 Scripture and made a little song:

"I'll never leave you, never forsake you, no matter what you are going through, I've got good news for you. I'll be with you always. In stormy weather, we'll be together, no matter what you're going through. I've got good news for you. I'll be with you always."

*Lord, I suppose you must keep the broken, and Lord, we pray that all those here who have seen a heavenly vision might pursue the One who loves them so, broken, heart aches, doubts and fears. These are the categories of those He calls and gives rest. Oh, Lord, do capture and keep us. We are too weak to keep ourselves. Help us to come into the foundation of the whole counsel of God. Be not tossed about as a church with every form of doctrine and cleverness of man but being built up in Christ together in fellowship. Oh, protect us. I pray for everybody here. Some who are not in a fellowship, a living fellowship where they can be protected in their spirit. Oh God, grant us to have living fellowship with brothers and sisters, who can keep us in the light as we fellowship*

*together with You. We thank You, Lord, for Your vision and your counsel. Keep us, Lord, according to Your eternal purpose. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

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