Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

Isaiah 35:7–10 says, “And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

That verse seven in the Darby translation reads, “And the mirage shall become a pool.”

Then let us read John's Gospel, chapter 14. In fact, let us read from chapter 13:37 to 14:1. I am reading from John 13:37: “Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

Let us look to the Lord in prayer.

Loving, gracious, heavenly Father, everlasting and covenant-keeping God, we return to Your presence once again with great expectation. We dare to come, O Lord, because of Your Son and what He has done for us, and because of the promises, O Lord, that You have made to us. Lord, even this morning, as You grant us open heavens, we worship around the Lord's table.

We pray now that You would speak to each one of us. Lord, we pray that You will touch us and revive us. There is a sense of expectation in our hearts. Lord, we pray that You would do something new for us, not just now, not just today, but from henceforth.

Lord, we pray that Your desire, concerning this place, concerning us as individuals, as families, as an assembly, and even Richmond as a whole, will be fulfilled. Lord, we pray that You will touch us, O Lord. We pray that You would descend once again and do what You did for our fathers, only even better. O Lord, we pray—unworthy and unfit as I am—that You would hide me behind the cross. Use me as seems good in Your sight.

Lord, touch my lips with Your coal. Burn away everything that does not belong to You. And, O Lord, for that which is from You, put Your unction upon it and grant utterance for it. Bind all the seen and unseen works of the enemy and bring us under the blood of the Lord Jesus. We ask this in the most precious name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduction

All right, dear brothers and sisters, I am, as usual, nervous. I told this to one of our dear brothers this morning, that I am nervous. He said, “Well, that is good. That is good.” One of the sisters reminded me, “Never ready, ever ready.”

Here we are. Last time, when we had an opportunity to meet—or rather, when I had an opportunity to share—it was from John's Gospel, chapter 13. The crux, or the bulk of the focus, was on the fact that the Lord is trying to remove this element of worldliness in us. Worldliness, not just in the sense of being indulgent or caught up with things that are “worldly,” but in the very sense of the world itself—its ways and so on—represented in Judas. And Judas was the keeper of the money bag.

And we thought about how money represents the most artificial thing man has ever invented. You see that it is artificial in the sense that there is nothing natural about it, yet it seems to control everything else. Speaking of the world, it is needed from the moment you are born until the time you go to the grave, but it does not go any further than that. Once Judas had left, Jesus was able to speak out of His heart.

And He started by saying that, now is the Son of Man glorified, and if the Son of Man is glorified, God is glorified in Him. Well, we thought about why He is making that connection. How can He see glory all the way through? And just because Judas left—because once Judas leaves, once the element of the world leaves, and once it has made up its mind to put Christ on the cross, or, Christ is going to the cross—Christ can see all the way through to glory and so on. Therefore, chapter 13 essentially speaks about man's condition and how we must come to the Lord's table. Not just in practice as we come, but that sense of examining ourselves before the Lord, while at the same time receiving from Him His life. As we do that, the Lord takes us further, and we move on from chapter 13 to chapter 14.

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

But there is a transition—a very strange transition if you notice—towards the end, there are things that are unspoken, that man does not articulate, but God knows them. In chapter 14, He says, “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.” Well, we wonder what He is talking about when He mentions their hearts being troubled. Because just moments ago, Christ had come to the uttermost, the lowest that He could descend. He became a servant. He washed His disciples' feet.

And as He did that, there are two things that come out of it. There is one disciple who is going to betray Him, and there is another disciple who is going to deny Him three times. It just speaks about how utterly impossible it is for human nature to improve whatsoever. Of course, there are other lessons there, but I am dwelling on the fact that despite the Lord Jesus Christ washing their feet, you still have these two situations. Combined with the fact that the Lord is now speaking about His departure, their hearts are just filled with trouble.

They are grieving; they are not sure what is happening or how to deal with this whole thing. And the Lord, who knows the hearts of men, speaks up. People are trying to cover it up, and they are probably trying to make it look good. But Jesus is trying to say, "Peter, you are talking about following Me and all that. But what? Your heart is troubled. Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me." What I am sharing is just my own meditation. There is nothing preachy about it.

For several weeks, our brothers have been sharing, if I can recollect, going all the way back, Lenny shared about the exchanged life. Soon after that, I think Brother Daniel also shared about the exchanged life. Then, when Mac shared, he spoke about the vertical and the horizontal—the work of the Lord in terms of recovery and rebuilding. And then Jerry shared about how the time to build the house is now. He spoke about how time is given so that God can accomplish His purpose. I have been meditating on these things. This is my own meditation. This has comforted my heart, and I pray and hope that it will bring some comfort and light to you as well.

Now, as I look at Peter over there, as I look at the disciples, as I look at Judas, as I look at the disciples whose feet the Lord has washed, it is a perfect picture of how helpless we are. There is nothing good that is going to come out of them. Objectively, Jesus doing these things for them is still not going to fix the problem. There is still a Judas. There is still a Peter who is going to deny Him three times. Nothing is going to change. Then what has to change? And what can bring about the change?

Is the Mirage Just a Mirage?

We read Isaiah. It does seem like, am I ever going to be just this way? Am I ever going to talk about these wonderful things the Lord did in the past? Is it ever going to be just that? Is it just make-believe, just claim it or, fake it till you make it? Do you just continue to push yourself and make yourself feel that way? Yes, this is how it is. You just keep going, and maybe one day it will just click into place. Is it just that? Is the mirage just a mirage? Is it just an illusion? At a distance, it looks like water, but maybe it is not water. And am I just traveling that way? Is it all true? Is it real?

Those are some of the big questions, I think, and the unspoken questions, at least in my heart. And we always think that, somehow, we must tell Jesus what we are feeling. But Jesus understands what is in our hearts, what is really burdening us, what is really pulling us down. He knows our hearts.

He knows how practical our questions, our problems, our confusions, and our anxieties are. Therefore, He takes up the whole matter of life in chapter 14. Now He has washed their feet, and now He is going to give them something in chapter 14, which is about an essential union with Him—the exchanged life.

The exchanged life, the union life, the life of God in the soul of man. Just amazing. Sounds amazing. But ask anyone, brother or sister, how much are you in the experience of that? And I think maybe most of us—who knows, all of us—at least I for sure, am going to say that Yes, I long for it. I want to know more about it. And perhaps it is

something that we must continue to learn more and more about. There is no doubt about it.

I remember. If I may quote Jerry, I do not know if he is going to excuse me for that. Last time it was Jerry's birthday, and I asked Jerry, “What is one thing that, if you could just start over again, you would do differently? What is it that you really—” He said, “I would want to know the exchanged life more.”

And true it is. Perhaps if you go to the youngest in the fellowship and ask, “Hey, what is it that you really want from the Lord?” It is that big question—the exchanged life. Is it just distant? Is it just a mirage? Is it just there, a pool? Is it just a shadow in the distance? Is it some kind of phantom out there? We just talk about these things, make believe in ourselves, emotionally, to think that these things are true.

The Depth of Peter’s Trouble

What is going on? And the Lord knows these things. And therefore, the Lord says, “Let not your heart be troubled.” We have to remember He is saying that to Peter. He knows what kind of storms are brewing and coming, what kind of waves are basically pouring over Peter's heart and mind. And for the rest of the disciples as well, He knows them. He says, “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.”

Now, before we really go into the chapter, I just want to point out how much trouble is brewing in Peter's heart and mind. They have seen three and a half years of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have seen, touched, and heard things that perhaps no one had seen so far. They have seen things up close—yes, up close.

Here they are at the end of three and a half years, at the end of all the words that Jesus would speak, at the end of all the ministry the Lord did, at the end of all the doctrine, at the end of all the teaching, and Peter hears that he is going to deny Him three times? “You are going to deny Me three times. Peter, there is no hope for you. Do you think that you will lay down your life for Me? No, no, you are going to deny Me three times.”

Just the utter impossibility of this Christian life must have confronted Peter. He is like, “I kind of just ruined it. Of course, if Jesus is saying this, it must be true.” Just think about it. And, by the way, from that point forward, in the rest of the Last Supper episode, in that whole scene, you do not see Peter speak anymore. He is dumbfounded; he is just listening; he is just absorbing. Peter, who the brothers say has a foot-shaped mouth, is not going to speak anymore, any further. Because he understands his reality now. He spoke. He has thought he is something. He is a great mover and shaker; he is going to do something. It all comes to nothing. He just stands there, dumbfounded. I want to present two examples to you before we go on.

The Impossibility of the House and Its Ministers

Ezekiel's Temple: Not Meant for Man to Build

The impossibility of the house, the impossibility or the impossible design of the house itself, and the impossible nature of its ministers—two things. I want to read a portion to you in Ezekiel, chapter 41.

Ezekiel, chapter 41. There is much over there, and I am conscious that there are those here who have read more, prayed more, and know more than I ever would in a lifetime. I will be very cautious and very simple as I put this. There is much in that chapter, but I will give you a gist of it, and then I think we will read one verse.

The temple of Ezekiel is an impossible structure. Somehow, it just looks like this: it stands on a mountaintop, and then it increases as it goes up. There are pillars, pillars that bear no weight at all. There are windows, but the windows are all inside, not outside. We have these windows and you can see outside, but everything has a window. Even the smallest thing inside the temple has a window, but the windows are all inside. It makes no human sense. There are gates, but they are unlike our gates. They are gate complexes.

It is very weird. A lot of times, as I was reading it, I thought, let me get a nice chart of the temple and then try to follow all of these things. In fact, the cubit and the measuring stick and the measuring rod are entirely different measurements altogether. They are not human cubits at all. What is all this?

I heard an older brother say, "Do you think God gave all those measurements so that you could build it? No," I said. "Then why is He giving them?" He said, "He is trying to show you that you cannot build it. You cannot build it."

"I will build My church." The Lord alone can build it. None of us can build it. Then what does it mean? Should we just sit back and think, "Jesus will do it"?

Let us read the verse: Chapter 41:7.

"And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house was still upward, and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst."

I am not reading the other strange things that are out there—not strange in the sense of what we usually mean by strange, but there are incredible things out there. The house is impossible for us to build. Thinking about it, our own life is difficult to build. Our own testimony, our own lives, our own homes, our own families—not to mention God's assembly, not to mention the universal body of Christ.

I am pretty sure there is a lot of truth in what that brother said—that the measurements are given not so that you would go and attempt to build it, but rather to discourage you from trying to build it. That is the impossibility of the house.

The Priests, Levites, and Nazarites

And then let us talk about the impossibility of its members. Please follow me in Leviticus. I am not going to read the whole thing, but in Leviticus chapter 8, you have the setting apart and the consecration of the priests. That is chapter eight here.

And where is it? Yes, Chapter eight, Leviticus 8:1-3: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Verse 6: "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water."

Verses 7 to 9 talk about how they were clothed—the high priest was clothed. Verses 10 to 12 talk about how the high priest was anointed. Again, from verse thirteen onwards, it speaks about how his sons were clothed. Verses 14 to 21 speak about the offerings they brought, and so on.

We encounter the priests in Numbers; let us see. There is another category of people in the Book of Numbers. The Book of Numbers, chapter three. I am not going to read the whole portion, but I am just pointing out the general areas where this is described so you can follow. Numbers chapter three describes how the tribe of Levites was chosen by the Lord. What the Lord did with the Levites was that, essentially, the Lord wants all of His people to be priests—a nation of priests. In Exodus 19, He says that you would be a kingdom of priests.

But then, when they fell from that position, from that opportunity, the Lord took the Levites as representatives of the rest of the assembly. And the way He did that was by using the principle of the firstborn. Imagine, the firstborn represents the rest of the family line behind him. There is a family. What the Lord would say is, pick the firstborn of, let us say, Ephraim—someone in the tribe of Ephraim, one of the firstborns, one of the many firstborns.

He says that, take one Levite and use that Levite as a redemption for that Ephraimite. Basically, the whole family behind the firstborn of that Ephraimite is now represented by this one Levite. Are you with me? All right. I generally put people to sleep, so I was checking.

Likewise, the Lord went through the entire host of Israelites. He took the firstborn of every single family and used one Levite to redeem every single one of them. Of course, wherever there was the number exceeded; they had to be redeemed by a certain amount of silver and then given back to the priests. But the principle is simple: the Levites represented the rest of the assembly. Now, when the Levites would serve in the courts of the Lord, in the temple complex or in the tabernacle, it would be as if the entire nation of Israel were serving the Lord. That is the whole grand idea.

We saw the priests, now we see the Levites. There is another category of people, and that is in Numbers 6:1-2. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD.” Here is a third interesting category of people: the Nazarite.

It does not require being a Levite to be a Nazirite. It could be anyone, and he could set himself apart for the Lord. Now, why are we even talking about all these things? Because this is a picture. Big animal pictures, as they say, try to communicate a very important truth: there is a diversity of gifts. There are many ministries that exist. We cannot have one without the other. We cannot have one that is disproportionate to the other. We ought to have a priestly life. We have to have Levite life. We have to have Nazarite life as well.

The Threefold Blessing

And if you think that is just too much of a connection being made, then you will notice that in the same chapter, after the Nazarite has been fully explained, you have the threefold blessing which the Lord gives, saying, “This is how you are to bless the Lord's people.” That is in Numbers 6: 22-27.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

This is the threefold blessing because all three different aspects of a believer's life are now coming into right alignment with God's will. The priest speaks about the inward life—the closet life, the prayer, the worship, the adoration, the intercession, the priestly life.

Is there anyone who would disagree that a Christian is not to be a priest? The Christian is a priest. Peter says that we are a nation, a royal priesthood. But then, is the Christian entirely a priest? Well, is that all?

Does he live in a closet? No, he is called to be a Levite as well. He is called to be a Levite as well. Well, I would love to remain priestly and just enjoy the worship. I always tell the brothers that this open time of worship is the best time of my week.

You do not want to trade that for anything, not even for this preaching. If it were that, we could just have the entire time only for worship, that would be amazing. But that is not the Lord's order.

The Lord wants us to be Levites as well. Now, what does Levite do? I am not going to bore you with the details, but there are at least three families among the Levites. And I would request that you pursue the whole thing further.

The Gershonite, the Kohathite, and the Merarite

And Numbers chapter four describes these three families of the Levites: the Gershonite family, the Kohathite family, and the Merarite family. It is there in the Bible for a reason. Let us read.

The Gershonites are responsible for the coverings—the goatskin covering, the ram skin covering, the sea cow covering, the linen, and all of that. They are responsible for the curtains and everything. That is what they bear in their hands. It speaks about all of that outward testimony that is seen in the world. We, as the Levites, as God's people, are going to bear that. We have to show that. But is that all that we show? No.

Then there is the Merari family, the Merarites. Why are they responsible? Those, perhaps, are all the blue-collar workers, maybe. They got the boards, the bars, the sockets—all these things that hold the structure together. They basically carry those.

But what is the first family or the first ministry the Levites must serve? It is the Kohathites. Do you know what the Kohathites are supposed to do? The Kohathites are supposed to take the most holy things and bear them on their shoulders.

How would you understand that in the light of the New Testament? It is rather straightforward. The Kohathite is speaking about essentially raising up and lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ in terms of proclamation of truth, in terms of asserting the truth, in terms of living that truth, in terms of lifting up the person and the perfection of Jesus Christ—essentially Him as the person, as the central, the sum and the centrality of everything—lifting up Jesus Christ. That is the number one ministry the Levite has to perform, and the Kohathite has to perform it on his shoulder.

Then comes the Gershonite. The Gershonite comes. Then, all of that testimony goes outward. People speak and people see what is happening. The ram skin, the goatskin. And each of them has wonderful meanings. And I am sure, all of that is to be lifted up.

And then at the very end comes the Merari. These are the brothers, not people. I would not say that. I think I would be mistaken if I said, “This is a different set of people.” This is the same set of people,

And they pull people together. The boards and the bars and the bolts and the sockets and the pins and all these things that hold things together. That is the ministry, all three: preaching and proclaiming the word of God, exalting Jesus Christ, proclaiming His gospel, which stands at the head of all things, showing forth the transformed life, the transformation, the sanctification, the testimony that goes out in the Gershonite. That is the ministry. And then building the body together, pulling people together, holding them together. As difficult as we are—I am a very difficult person—holding us together. That is the Merarite ministry.

By the way, I just moved to a new home, and in these last two days, I have seen all three ministries. The brothers did the Kohathite, Gershonite, and Merarite ministries for

us. Really blessed. Now, all of these things are impossible, humanly speaking. Where do you draw the lines?

How do you do that exactly? Am I Kohathite? Am I a Gershonite? Am I a Merarite, or am I putting on the Kohathite hat? Am I putting on the Merarite hat, or this or that, and so on and so forth?

Now, someone explained to me that, the tree in the morning does not wake up and think, "Let us get the photosynthesis chapter out. Let us see how photosynthesis is done. The first thing is, the photon is supposed to hit the chlorophyll molecule and then, the photolytic decomposition happens, and so on and so forth." The tree just wakes up, smells the coffee, it just smiles at the Lord, thanks Him, and just lives.

I think, in my small mind, that my problem—I would not say "we" want, but I think my problem—is that I am trying to just analyze, overanalyze, and paralyze myself by asking, "How exactly is this done? What is the plethora of different ways, and what exactly is going on?" That is my problem. And perhaps that is the problem that is brewing in Peter's heart and mind.

An impossible house that is impossible to build, an impossible ministry that we cannot do. There is a diversity of gifts, ministries, and so on. But how do you really piece that together? How do you pull all of that together? How do you truly bring all of these difficult people together?

One of the easiest things is to say, "Let us not face the difficult things. Let us just be nice to each other. Let us just stick to the priestly things. We will worship, we will sing songs, we will just relax about it, and it will be done." That is very easy to do.

But trust me, the only time the triune God is going to pour out and proclaim His threefold blessing upon us is when He sees all three of them: the Priest, the Levite, and the Nazarite. And I think I did not mention the Nazarite. We are all called to be Nazarites as we go out into our regular world, outside in our communities, we are supposed to be Nazarites.

In fact, I found it very interesting. I was reading that the calling of the Nazarite is as difficult as that of the high priest. The high priest was not allowed to mourn for his own family.

His sons could do it; the rest of the Levites could do it. They could mourn for their immediate family members. But the high priest cannot be touched by any defilement of death. Who else is not supposed to do that? The Nazarite.

The Nazarite is not supposed, or is basically not supposed, to come into contact with death of any sort. And you would find it interesting that in the book of Numbers, if you really run the math, the number of men is upwards of 600,000. If you assume an equal number of women, it comes to about 1.2 million. Now, think about this: in 40 years, all of them had to die so that the new generation could enter. Guess what the number of people dying every day would be?

Eighty-two people are dying every day. If you count just the brothers, it is roughly forty-two. And if you count both brothers and sisters, eighty-two of them are dying every day. Death all around. Defilement all around.

Death, death, death working in the camp, death all around. And here God gives the call, saying that, you do not have to be a Levite by birth; you can be a Nazarite.

How do we do this thing? This is difficult. This is difficult. Let us come to John's Gospel, chapter 14. And the Lord really tells us what He is doing. The exchanged life.

The Father's House

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

Chapter 14. The Lord begins by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Now, I had always read that statement and just, went over it because a lot of times, somewhere in the back of my mind, there is an unspoken assumption that, Jesus just speaks flowery things. "You believe in God, believe also in Me."

What He is doing is claiming absolute deity. He is saying, you believe in God. Where does it all begin for your troubles to be quiet? Where your victory really begins is when you truly realize that I, as a person—in the sense of Jesus Christ as a person—am saying that if you believe in God, you must believe in Me. Very specifically, He is saying, stop dealing with Me as if I am some kind of empty philosophy, a nice person at a distance whom you are not sure about, some kind of phantom out there.

He is saying that you believe in God; now believe in Me. He is saying that you believe in God. He is saying, believe in Me. He is claiming the same exact allegiance in terms of faith and truth, just as the Father claims. "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me."

Then He goes on to say—and I have never understood the transition— "In my Father's house are many mansions." And I am like, Jesus, that guy is going to deny You three times. Would You please talk about it? Can You please address that? Because that is me. Peter is better. He just did it three times. I do not know how many times I have denied Him.

And I really want to know, Lord, do You have a solution to that? Or are You just going to say, "Let not your heart be troubled; it is going to be okay?" Is that what You are saying?

The Vision of the Father's House

Why should we be taught about the Father's house? You will find it interesting. I am sure it has crossed your mind that the vision of the God of Bethel, the El Bethel who gives that vision, is not given to Isaac. It is Jacob, who runs from his house, who receives that vision. The one who is running away, the one who has the difficulty, is given the vision of the Father's house. Wait a minute, what is He talking about?

Is the Lord saying, Peter, in order for you to recover from where you are, or to even begin overcoming it, or to really see how this trouble goes away, the first thing that you need to know is about the Father's house? Let Me tell you about the Father's house. He says, “In My Father's house are many mansions, many dwellings, a multiplicity of dwellings.” Let me ask you, what is He even talking about? A lot of times, I thought that He is talking about paradise, He is talking about heaven.

He is talking about heaven. But is He only talking about heaven? When was the first time He talks about His Father's house in John's Gospel? It is when He is turning over the tables of the money changers. What is He talking about? Is He talking about the Father's house as the temple, or is He talking about the Father's house as the ultimate temple where we would be with Him forever and evermore?

What is He talking about when He says that, “if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again for you?” Is He talking about ultimately coming to Me one fine day on the clouds of glory? There is more to it because there had to be since Peter has a very clear existential problem here. Jesus was not just changing the topic.

There are so many things to cover. Let Me talk about the next thing. And then He is moving. No, He is not talking about the next thing. He is dealing with Peter's problem. He is talking about dealing with people who betray Him. He is speaking to those who would deny Him. He is saying, “In My Father's house are many mansions.” He is talking about the Father's house.

Now apply it wherever it is. Cut or slice that truth anywhere and you still have the same beauty, the same pattern of the Father's house, the dwelling with the Father, the abiding with the Father. You can talk about it in terms of your local assembly, in terms of fellowship with the saints, or in terms of your home.

You talk about, in terms of how there is indeed a place whose architect and builder is the Father Himself, and He is building it. He says, “In My Father's house are many mansions.” He is saying that, Peter, the safest place for you to be is in the Father's house. What house, Lord? Are You talking about the one to come? Perhaps, Jesus is saying that all of these.

As your capacity increases, as you get to know Me more, you see that in increasing circles. But wherever you are at this point, Richmond Fellowship at 4424—then there it is. In My Father's house are many mansions. He is saying that I am preparing it, and as I prepare it, I will prepare you.

Do you know what Jerry shared in Haggai? He says that the people said the time to build the Lord's house has not yet come. What they essentially do, and what the Lord says, is to look at their own houses. I have felt many times that I am broken because perhaps the Lord's house is broken as well.

To fix Peter, the Lord is talking about building. To build Peter, the Lord is talking about building the house, saying, “I am building the house there.” And, as difficult as

humans are, we move further. Then this happens—verse eight, eventually, and I am sorry, verse six.

Father and I

To Know the Father

And in verse five asks, “Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” And Jesus answers with that wonderful, profound saying: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

And as soon as He says that—and I am cutting short the argument—Verse 8. Philip says, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” And in my little mind, that is the most profound prayer that man has ever made to God: “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” We are people who are never satisfied.

We are never satisfied as humans. But indeed, there is one thing that will absolutely satisfy us: to know the Father. Now, what is Philip even saying? I do not want to dwell too much on Philip, but you know that in chapter one, Philip first gets to know the Lord Jesus along with Nathanael. He is right there when Jesus begins to speak to Nathanael, and Philip says to Nathanael, “We have found the one of whom Moses wrote in the Law and the Prophets—Jesus, the son of Joseph.” Now, Philip's experience is that this is the mystical figure everyone spoke about. He really is the person everyone was talking about. He is here.

And then right after that, to him Nathanael, Jesus is explaining that He saw him under the fig tree. Then the revelation comes through Nathanael, saying, “You are the Son of God, the King of Israel.” Philip begins to understand that there is something wrong with his understanding. He thought Jesus was just this mystical, prophesied figure, but it looks like He is the Son of God.

God, how does that even fit together? The King of Israel—how can He just be a normal carpenter? What is He even talking about? And the next time we see Philip is in chapter six, where the Lord is about to feed the multitude. He says, “Philip, how do you think we are going to buy food for so many?”

And that was not because Jesus did not know. Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do. Therefore, in that whole episode, Jesus speaks about how He Himself is the bread of life, how He would raise those at the last day, and so on and so forth. Philip had an experience and understanding of who Jesus was—that He was the bread of life, that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.

The Request to See the Father

He understood that something was different about Jesus. His capacity increased. But that is not where it ends for Philip. Philip appears again in chapter 12, again in John's gospel. There, Philip is approached by a group of Greeks who say that they want to see

Jesus. “We want to see Jesus, sir. We want to see Jesus.” And Philip goes to his best friend Nathanael. Nathanael and Philip both go to Jesus and say that there are people who want to talk to Him. Then Jesus goes on to talk about something else.

He says, “Except a grain of wheat, dies, it abides alone. But once it dies, it brings forth much fruit, abundant fruit. When I am lifted up, I shall draw all men toward Me.” And for the longest time I read it and I said, like, Jesus, why do You not answer the question that is asked? Why do You talk about something else?

But He is actually answering. He is saying, to see Me is not just to come to Me and visit Me and exchange pleasantries. That is not how you know Me and see Me. The only way to really know Me is through the experience of the cross. And He is talking about the wheat dying. He is talking about being lifted up and so on. Philip had really come to a lot of experience with Christ, and Jesus had been watching Philip and raising him through all these experiences.

Dear brothers and sisters, there are a lot of young folks—the things that you are struggling with, the questions, anxieties, uncertainties—trust me, the Lord is working on you, no doubt about it. And as that happened, now you see Philip for the last time, and he makes this plea: “Show us the Father, and it will suffice.”

He knows everything about Jesus. But there is one thing that seems to be missing. Something is missing—the power, the eternal life of the Father. He is saying, “Show us the Father, and it will suffice.”

That should be it. And trust me, that is basically a paraphrase of: “give us the exchanged life, and that should be enough. Give us God's life. Give us God Himself. Give us the Father Himself. Bring His very life, His presence, to us here right now. And that should suffice.” That is my take on it. I hope it is true. Philip is saying, “Show us the Father.”

When he is saying, “Show us the Father,” he is saying, “Give us that exchanged life. Give us that Father. Give it to us.” He is not talking about some kind of philosophy. He knows that in the Old Testament. He has read his Old Testament. He knows that if people see God, they might not survive. He knows all that. He is not asking for just some kind of epiphany or some fantastical experience. He is talking about giving us the Father, showing us the Father, revealing Him. That is the word over there, reveal. Expose the Father to us. And here is the beautiful thing.

Verse 9. Please read it along with me.

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” And then here is the argument.

The Father in Me, and I in Him

Follow on verse ten. He says, “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” There are two words there: the words and the works.

And in verse 11 He says, “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.”

What is Jesus trying to do now? Jesus is trying to explain the exchanged life. He is modeling Himself and the Father. Before He can talk about the believer and Himself, He is saying, “Look at Me and the Father, look at Me and the Father.”

And in order to point that out, He is saying, “Well, how?” What is the evidence of the exchanged life? What is the evidence of the exchanged life? He is saying, look at the words that come out. And He is saying then, well, the words can be misleading or could be wrong. But then, for the very work's sake, He is saying, look at the fruit of My life. Look at what has come out of My life.

Dear brothers and sisters, the evidence of the exchanged life is not so much in anything else, but in what is really coming out of the life. What is really coming out of the life? These are not works on which you stand before God. No, this is not that at all. That is law. We are not talking about that. This is talking about God's work, God's life, and God's energy working through us to attain God's purpose—God working through us. God was working through Jesus. I do not have time to show you, but in Acts it says that God worked these things. God spoke through Jesus. God was working through Jesus. And if Jesus had left it at that, it would still have been confusing. But He comes back to Peter, starting from verse twelve onward. Please follow along.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” Now we will say, Lord, why? Why are You changing the argument?

We were talking about Peter for a moment. Then suddenly You spoke about the Father's house. I understand. You are just saying that to fix Peter, you have to fix basically the house that is being built. I understand that.

Then we said, “show us the Father.” But then You said, “well, look at Me.” And You said, “look at My works that came out because that is the Father working through Me.” But then You shifted the argument to now say that, “he who believes in Me shall do these things and greater things than these.” Why are You talking about that? Because at that point He is talking about the exchanged life.

He is saying, just as the evidence of My deity, the evidence of My being united with the Father at all times, is the works that are coming out of My life, the fruit that is coming out of My life. He is saying, the evidence of Me being with you, united with you, in union with you, is going to be the works that come out of you. He who believes in Me

shall do these things and shall do greater things than these. Now, if He had said that and left, we would have been busy just doing work, all of us would just be going around and trying to do different things.

But then this is what He says, this is the work. A lot of times, we think that we understand words, but our language is broken. We are in a broken world. Our understanding of what God means is largely based on our own understanding of this broken world.

Whatever You Ask in My Name, I Will Do

And therefore, we somehow just try to extrapolate our understanding to Him. Verse 13 and 14 says, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” Now the question becomes, just a second ago, in the verse above, He said, “He who believes in Me shall do these things and shall do greater things than these.” But now He says, “Whatever you shall ask in My name, I will do.”

You are like, wait a second, dear Jesus, who is doing it over here? Is it Peter who is going to do it, or is it You who is going to do it? You see, that very question which we ask—Is it Jesus or is it me? —what does it speak about our own mind, how it is broken.

One brother said that the very reason we are trying to explain the Trinity speaks volumes about how broken we are, because we want things to be separated. We want the lines to be drawn. We want it to be divided into its parts and, dissected—dead to our satisfaction—before we can say that we know this thing. But what God has put together, let no man put asunder.

Now is the question of Peter working. Is it Peter who is going to do these things and greater things than these? Or is it Jesus who is saying, “I will do, I will do.” Twice He says, “I will do, I will do.” Before that, He says, “He will do, he will do,” speaking of whoever that believer is. And then, third, He says, “I will do, I will do.”

But how is it supposed to be accomplished? He says, “Ask, pray.” This is the nuts and bolts of things. The first thing was for the Father's house. To really get fixed, get in the business with the Father's house. Abide in God's assembly. Let us abide in God's assembly. Let us focus on what is happening with the Lord's house, what is happening with the testimony, how we are going to go into the next generation.

The next thing is, He says, “Ask, pray.” You know something fantastic about this in verse 13—look at this. He says, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” You know that when we pray, I had not seen this before but look at this: He is saying that as you ask, I will do it. Not just because you want it, but because that is an occasion for Me to show that I am really exalted and seated at the right hand of God. And that everything the Father said about Me, and everything the Father had planned in redemptive history, all of that is true. And all of that is proven when your prayer is answered. Ask. He is saying, “Ask.”

I was listening to this other brother, I think Brother Gibbs, a Baptist minister on YouTube, an older brother. He said, “How dare you ask God for so little? How dare you ask Him for so little?” He said one of the safest prayers you can make is an impossible prayer. If your prayer is not impossible, maybe God is not interested.

I do not know how much truth there is to that, but there is some truth in it. He is saying that if you pray, I will answer so that the Father may be glorified. There are at least reasons outside of us, such as needing something or having a problem. We have a problem.

There is another motive here of Jesus. Jesus is saying that, as you know well, as I answer the prayer, the Father is going to be glorified in the Son, the Father would be vindicated. It would be proven beyond doubt that I am indeed seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty on high. Therefore, you ask, and I will do it.

And then He goes on to talk about how He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and how He would give peace in our hearts.

Practical Application and Encouragement

Yet Not I, but the Grace of God with Me

Dear brothers and sisters, I think I will end here, but I would like to point out a few examples. When Paul says in I Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

I thought, Paul, this is for someone like you who is really out there for the Lord, who is really focused on the Lord, who has really sacrificed. But if you just look backwards, at what he is talking about—verses 57, 56, 55, 54, all the way up to 51—it is all about resurrection. After having spoken about resurrection, he is saying, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

It looks like your labor. But then you spoke about the resurrection power of Jesus. Whose labor is this anyway? And every time we ask those questions, we ask them from the point of that separated life, that life that has, that is still trying to come out.

You move further and then, all the way from verse 50 to 35, working back upwards, he is explaining in elaborate detail the power of resurrection and resurrection in general, working his way back upwards, and all the way through. Now I read verse ten. This is where He begins the argument about resurrection. I was blown away when I read this.

I was thinking, how did he segue? How did he transition from talking about the gospel in the first few verses, saying, “Hey, this is the gospel which you received, which we preached to you.” How did he transition into resurrection? This is how he transitions in verse 10-11: “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet

not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

And then he segues into verse twelve, saying, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead," and so on. What is he talking about? Whose labor is it? Is it Paul's labor? You cannot say no to that because we have said no to that for long enough. We have eaten that humble pie, saying, "Oh, no, no, it is not." Here is another interesting one from the Old Testament. Here is an interesting one from the Old Testament.

God's Spirit and Our Hands Working Together

Zechariah, chapter 4. Very famous words. Zechariah 4:6 says, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." If that were all that was in the Bible, it would have been difficult, because if you read further, here is what it says.

That was six. And this is verse nine: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you."

I am leaving out many other details, but that is what I wanted to point out. The Spirit is God's, but the hands—they are our hands, dear brothers, and sisters. They are our hands.

God Speaking Through the Regenerated Spirit

We were talking to Ed—when Jim, Vineel, and I were there. Ed made a fantastic point. He was preaching from the Book of Job. It came up, and we mentioned that there is this wonderful book by Brother Stephen Kaung on Job, which is "The Splendor of His Ways." He talks about how Job's three friends were Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

These three are like the three aspects of a person's soul: the mind, the will, and the emotion, each assailing him as suffering comes and as life happens, and so on. They go in cycles of discussion, the mind confronting him, the emotion confronting him, the will confronting him. But none of them is able to justify Job, nor are they able to justify Job's God.

And at the very end, Elihu comes, who, according to our brother Stephen, points out that he is the new life. He is the regenerated spirit, a new life. Elihu says, "I am the youngest, so I kept quiet; I waited for you guys to finish." Therefore, Elihu speaks. And here is what Brother Ed corrected.

He said, and I said that, after Elihu spoke, God Almighty speaks from the whirlwind. He said, "Are you sure that is the case?" I said, "That is how I read it." He said, "That is our problem. That is how we read it."

He said that. What if God was beginning to speak through Elihu? Up until that point, it was Elihu's voice—it was our own regenerated spirit speaking to us with wisdom, with discernment, and so on. But there comes a point where God begins to speak through

that. And He has His reasons behind it, like how He, again, cuts back to showing and so on.

Conclusion

The point is, brothers and sisters, I think every time we talk about whether Jesus is doing it, or I am doing it, the cleanest escape from all of this is to just say, just let Jesus do it. Let us just be priests about it. Dear brothers and sisters, my Bible says that it is the priestly life that the Lord is asking for—the inner life, the closet life, the prayer life, the worship life, the adoration around the Lord's table, lifting Him up. And then there is this Levite life, where there is active ministry: lifting up, proclaiming, preaching Christ, the Son of God, showing forth that testimony, and also building the people together, putting them together, and then continuing to be a Nazarite through and through, all the way, separated unto God.

And as we do this, the threefold blessing of the Lord comes upon us. In fact, I did not read it, but in Numbers 7:89, it says Moses heard the voice of Him speaking from between the cherubim. The highest point of God's purpose is reached, and God is now speaking from within His purpose. He is speaking to us.

Let us pray. *Loving, gracious heavenly Father, we thank You for Your word, for it is sharper than any two-edged sword. Thank You, Lord, for how You took Peter and the trouble that was brewing in his heart and mind, and for all of us, O Lord, and how You said, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me." Thank You, Lord, for pointing out that indeed it is the Father's house as it is being built, and as You built here, and as it is being built up there as well. O Lord, may we ourselves also be built.*

And the fact, oh Lord, that it is ultimately You, Jesus, the person, the Son of God, the Man who came down here for us. As we dwell in You, as we abide in You, Lord, You will do. And as You do, we will do. And all of this is connected with prayer. And as we ask in Your name, because You are exalted, because You want the Father to be glorified, You will do it.

And as You do it, O Lord, fruit is going to show forth. The mirage shall indeed become a pool of water. We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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