

## *Anchor of Hope 3*

Isaiah 30 - The lead-in to the verse I want to get to is very familiar. In the 15th verse it says, "For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." You know it is interesting that the song we sing stops there. That is not the end of the verse. Equally instructive, equally purposeful to returning and rest and in quietness and in confidence is "... and ye would not." It is not your natural instinct; it is not your characteristic; it is not an expression of your first nature to respond to God that way. Interestingly enough if a child is doing what is right, he does not need correction. The exhortations of scripture, the warnings of scripture are because there are things that we have to do that we are not typically going to do, and we have to be encouraged to do things because it is not what we are good at. This is the context of the 15th verse "...in returning and rest and in quietness and in confidence...But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift." I read this verse and I think of Jonah. Does anyone think of Jonah? God said, "Go to Nineveh." "No, I already have tickets for Tarshish. So I'm going to get on this boat." "I have a storm." "I think I can persuade them to throw me overboard." "That's why I made that fish circle under a place where the storm hasn't happened yet and the boat hasn't gotten to yet." Do not play chess with God; He is way ahead. Returning and rest is easier than fish bellies.

"So, we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift." There is another portion of scripture that this makes me think of, not in a negative context. It is one that consistently humbles me and it seems to be consistently necessary. It is the sure mercies of David; that is the story of the sure mercies of David. Buddy Benton said a long time ago, "Let me translate the sure mercies of David for you in a very practical application; it is God saying, 'I will overtake you in all of your ways.'" That is a good thing because I seem to get my way. It seems to have a resonance; it seems to be my first alternative so that my experience of redemption is accessed by repentance. I have no access to redemption apart from repentance. I may have been introduced to the concept of repentance by inappropriate behavior, but that is not the only thing that repentance is designed for. Real repentance goes past behavior. Jesus immediately revealed to us that it goes past behavior. He said, You've heard Moses say and I'm still on page with Moses – it is not good to kill people. Let's stick with that, but if you hate, you are guilty of murder. So, he took it past what Moses said; he took it to another level of repentance. To be just as convicted, to be just as appalled, to be just as remorseful, to be just as affected and taken out of our frame by hatred as we would if we actually murdered somebody. That puts a

different edge to 'if you have ought against your brother go to your brother.' It is not a suggestion. If you have ought with your brother, let the next words that come out of your mouth be to your brother. Do not talk to anyone until you talk to your brother because the initial instinct is, "Blah, blah, blah. I can't believe that." That is our instinct. What about if you know your brother has ought with you? Should you wait for your brother to come to you? No, it says, "Go to your brother." The first words that come out of our mouths should be to our brother, but I'm not sure that should be the first thing we do if we have angst, which is a lot of soulish energy built up, if there is a lot of attitude or justification and accusations. That is one of the best defenses, you know, to counter-accuse. My mother would say when I would counter-accuse, "If your friend jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, would you jump?" A counter-accusation does not absolve you from your own accountability. "One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill." There is a promise in that. Then here is the consequence to 'and ye would not.' Not only would you not return and rest and be quiet and have confidence but you fled. "Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you." If He did not wait, He could not be gracious; He would have to be harsh or at least what would appear harsh. And here is the key, "And therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you."

I want to turn to Ephesians 2. We are working our way toward the back of the Bible. I do not think we will get to Revelation, but I think hopefully we will get to Hebrews. If He has to be exalted before He can be merciful, how do I exalt the Lord? I could sing a song: I exalt Thee; I exalt Thee. I am not sure that does anything for Him. He is high above all heavens, a name above all names. He does not get lifted up by my singing. How do I increase the distance between God and me? The sense of exalting is to lift something up, to put it in a notable, remarkable, honorable place. Exalt! How would I increase the distance between God and me; I can't lift Him? Humble myself. Therefore will the Lord be exalted that He might be merciful. If we want the mercy of God, we have to humble ourselves.

Picking up that context in the fourth verse of the second chapter of Ephesians it says, "But God, who has an abundant supply of mercy, because He has great love for us..." If we want to have mercy, if we want to encounter mercy, He has mercy on the foundation and out of the resource of His great love. Because of His great love, He has abundant mercy. If He did not love us, the implication here is that He would not have mercy. He has mercy because He has love. The mercy is commensurate with the amount and value and the quality and the quantity of His love. He is rich in mercy because He has abundant love, and it is toward me. This is amazing! This is like Isaiah or David; they both echoed similar thought: Why are you interested in me? What is it? I don't get you; I can't do you; my instincts

are contrary; when we enter into judgment, I judge you unfairly instead of being judged by you; we cannot be further out of consistency and harmony. I do not know why you bother. That is a great foundation to establish. I do not know, God, why. Because the presumptive attitude of, “Oh, I think I'm important enough for God to mess with,” does not highly exalt Him. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us.

What I want to take a look at this morning for a little bit is mercy and I want to see what resides in mercy. Let's take a thought from the Old Testament: if we had mercy and we made a throne out of it, what would sit in that? What would sit in the mercy seat? The quantity, the quality, the characteristic of God because of His love having mercy houses something; there is something couched in mercy. Why have a seat that no one is going to sit in? God does not do things without purpose. There is a mercy seat, and it is upheld by love, but what is it that is supported by mercy? We know that mercy is supported by love. The expression of mercy is grace. It says that when we have a need, we should boldly approach the throne of grace. What is the throne of grace? It is the mercy seat; that is the throne that grace sits in: mercy. God is coming to us out of His mercy through grace; our approach to Him is by grace because of His mercy.

Moses came to a place where he stood on Mount Horeb and dialogued with God. It sounded something similar to this, “There is beyond question the reality that I have found grace in your sight.” Should we rehearse the grace of Moses, the grace of God toward Moses? His life was preserved instead of being thrown into the Nile, which was the commandment of Pharaoh; then, his mother grew fearful that some of her neighbors were going to turn her in for harboring an infant and noise would get out that it was a boy, so the Gestapo would come. It would not just be the child that suffered; it might be the whole village because some of these people were ruthless. She said, “We have to do something.” It occurred to her – maybe it came in a dream, we do not know – to make a basket and set the child adrift and put the older sister to follow along the bank to see what would happen. It was not coincidence that the basket ended up at the feet of Pharaoh's daughter. He was raised in Pharaoh's house, a fugitive from Pharaoh's law, fed by Pharaoh. That sounds like pretty amazing grace. All of this was working and he had no clue. It was not like he was a five-month-old baby, and he had a paddle and he was saying, “Oh, I have to go get to the princess.” He was just drifting; he did not even know enough to know if the sky was bright that day or not, and that was the only thing he could see. He was in a basket. Then, there are other things we all know. We get the point. He stood before God dialoguing after the 10 plagues, after the sea opened, after the army was drowned, after the manna started falling, after the rock followed them spewing water. Amazing!

The fact that he knew that God's grace was on his life was not exactly a sign of spiritual maturity. I mean it was not necessarily saying that he wasn't spiritually mature, but it would not have taken spiritual maturity to know that God had His hand on his life. But he said, "You know, if I don't learn your ways so that I can come into union with you, the grace that I have experienced so far hasn't been sufficient for that. It has brought me here, no question and thank you, Lord, thank you, Lord; but there must be something else because I still do not know you. The evidence of me knowing you would be that I already know your ways, and they seem foreign to me - this returning and rest. I was getting nervous on the western bank of the Red Sea, and I started praying and you said, 'Moses, just stretch out your arm. What are you thinking?' Oh, I stretched out my arms and the sea just opened. It was almost like if I had known your ways, I could have done that without interface. I would not have stood there chewing on my fingernails wondering how much time we had. If I had been good at returning and rest, I could've avoided a lot of anxiety." God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us. Then He gives us evidence that is so similar to but even greater than the resume that Moses had when he stood before God on Mount Horeb. Moses was alive and God blessed him. We were dead in trespasses and sin and that brought us into Christ life. We had an encounter with resurrection.

When the apostle Paul wrote I Corinthians 15, he bracketed that chapter with two events. One was the historical resurrection of Jesus, and he talked about it for the first 10 verses. The culmination of it was two-fold. He said, "If you don't believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead, there are over 500 people who saw him most of whom are still alive, and you can go talk to them. You do not have to take my word for it. You can go talk to them; they saw him in a physical form after he died and he was vertical, so you can go talk to them." The other thing he said was that the evidence of resurrection and the fact of it is not just that Jesus appeared out of the grave but that his sacrifice indeed was accepted. We know this to be true because our sins have been forgiven.

Paul anchored his discussion on resurrection in some very substantial, verifiable, concrete things because if it was our sin that took him down, the only way God could bring him up was by removing the weight that took him down. He did not die because of his own sin; that is why he was an acceptable sacrifice for ours. The evidence was that our sins took him down: The man that sinneth shall surely die. He did not sin but he took sin on him, and he died because of it. That he lives again and not only came back in the life that he had before he died, like Lazarus, but he came into a life that was far superior to the life that died. It could not have happened if the sins were not removed; they would have still been sitting on his chest holding him right there on that slab. There was no way God could bring him out without expunging the sin. This is the fulfillment of a bull or a goat or a lamb

or a turtledove being brought to the priest and going back to your tent forgiven. But, this is not just the act of sin by one man, one time; this is the sin of the world for all time by one sacrifice, never to be duplicated, only to benefit others through faith. Paul anchored his dissertation on resurrection by an event that they would be familiar with on a historic basis but they could even verify in their own lives on a very realistic encounter with God. Now, the 500 are gone; we cannot go talk to them, but I can talk to you. You can tell me what you experienced that lead to your recognition of need for your sins to be forgiven. You could recite to me the effect that forgiveness of sin has had on your soul and the burden of accountability before God that it released you from. That is just as much the verification of the historic event of the resurrection of Jesus as anything will ever be.

That is where Paul started first Corinthians 15: the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then in the end of the chapter, he talks about an event that has not happened yet. Then shall be fulfilled that which is written. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? For mortal has put on immortality, corruptible has put on incorruption, and we shall be changed. How long does it take? A blink, less than a blink. Why did it take God three days to get Jesus out of the grave? Was it a tough thing; was it hard? Was He straining, trying to get some angels to come help Him? Was He wondering where Michael was because He needed help? It was not that. The three-days-time was a testimony to principalities and powers that he was D-E-A-D because if he was not dead, there could be no purging of the sins. So he is out of the grave, our sins are atoned, and our first impression and experience with the resurrection that was purchased for us is that we are born again and our sins are forgiven. That's why in the expression of this mercy that Paul is talking about because of God's great love, it goes into verse five and says, "Even when we were dead in sins, he has quickened us together with Christ," and then here's the bracket – he talked about love being the foundation of mercy and here's grace as an expression – "for by grace are ye saved and has raised us up together and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ."

We have these three: love, mercy and grace. Love is the nature; the disposition of that nature is mercy; the characteristic of that and the expression of mercy is grace. We are approaching Him from grace. How do we access grace? By faith, we are saved by grace through faith. The only way you can get into this room is to come in through the foyer. If this room is grace, you cannot access this room without coming through faith, the door. The application of mercy is not our own effort; it is resourced in the provision of God's love. It is not something we do; it is something that does us. If we are going to do the works of God, we have to do what Jesus said – we have to believe, trust. It is by faith that we access the grace that is the operation and application of God is mercy to those that He loves. This thing

is related; it is not random; it is not scatterbrained; it is not arbitrary. It is predictable; it is definite.

That is important because in Galatians Paul introduces the concept and he defines it in a particular way. He says there is Spirit and there is flesh. What he is talking about when he talked about Spirit was not that there is just this unseen influence in the world; you cannot see it; you do not know it; you cannot smell it; you cannot taste it. That could very well be air because you cannot see that. Then, he says that there is flesh, so flesh would be that which is physical and that which is seen. However, that is not the contrast that he is making. What he is talking about concerning the contrast between flesh and Spirit is the difference between natures. There is a nature of that which is Spirit, and that's what we've been talking about so far – love, mercy, grace – the outworking, the outflow, the effusion of God towards His creation; and then there's the nature of flesh. He says that those two natures do not work together. It is like trying to put two giant magnets together, and you are trying to put the negative and the negative together. The closer you get them, the harder it is until finally they push away from each other. The way he described it scripturally, that picture of the aversion between flesh and Spirit was this: The flesh nature has an instinct and a capacity that will always cause it to have strong desire contrary to the influence of spirit. That is the new amplified version. The flesh lusts against the Spirit. Its desires are contrary to the desires of Spirit, and it is rooted in the fact that its nature is different, not just that the performance is different. Paul went on and said, "... and Spirit against the flesh." They are contrary to one another, so he is talking about an issue that includes nature; he is not talking about an issue of performance only.

We are going to consider the transition from the death and resurrection of Jesus to the glorified body that God intends to give to some as a testimony to the fact that His redemption does work, and it is not just a fairy story that might happen someday when we get to heaven. The church has doctrines that would make them say we believe that. There is a constant incursion into the church of that which was at one point capsulated as the rapture. We do not believe in the rapture; however, somehow we believe that without a vital, vibrant relationship with the Spirit of God where we humble ourselves before Him in order to exalt Him, in order to release mercy, so that grace will function in our lives that we are somehow going to be changed. There is a sense in which that is a more unbelievable approach to a rapture than that we are going to float off into the sky somewhere because that would be more likely to happen than our natures actually being changed with no investment on our part. So most of the condition of the churches – I'm talking about the church of Jesus Christ, those blood-bought, born-again, have tasted and experienced resurrection and the effect that it can have on

their lives have lost hope. They have lost any sense of the personal investment into the progression and the outworking of God's purpose in their lives on a personal basis. I have had to assess some things and I have had to ask the question, "Do I really believe that I'm going to receive a glorified body before I physically die or is that just a doctrine that I've heard that I believe?" I think it is an okay question. I think it is not enough for us to just "hold these truths to be self-evident." It did not work so well for this nation; it is a T-total mess, no matter how self-evident those truths were. I feel sorry for the people who are misaligned trying to recover the United States, to get back to the Christian roots upon which the Constitution was founded. It did not work; it will not work again. That is not the kingdom that we are looking for.

In Ephesians 2:12, it is talking about how people lived before they had the opportunity to partake of the mercy of God and the effect of grace. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope. Wow, if there is a diagnosis of the spiritual health of the world right now, including the church of Jesus Christ, I would say it is that they have no hope. You know what happens when your hope is damaged? Your heart is sick. Having no hope and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the life, by living, by living Christ. Worshiping him, although it is deserved, has an extremely limited, temporary benefit. I am not saying that we should not do it for all ages; I am just saying that the benefit diminishes over time.

Jesus walked with the 12, and they always did what he said do. When he talked about leaving, as a matter of fact the first time that he talked about them leaving, they said, "Where do we go? You have the words of life." Then he said he was going to go, and they said, "Don't go." There came a point in his relationship with them where he said, "It is important for you that I leave because Christ with you is not the hope of glory; it's Christ in you that's the hope of glory. You coming to full stature in Christ life – not Christ's life – growing up into him who is the head in all things unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is not just starting. You cannot finish without starting, so starting is fundamental; it is important; it is necessary; it is ordained of God, and it is blessed. It is an anchor, but it is not the end. The start has a purpose. Ultimately, the essence of sin in my life by the Holy Spirit has become that I have not finished because that is an assault against the intent of God when He began, not just began in my life but when He first started creating.

There was an intent in His heart. God did not create to make the world subject to vanity. That is what it says – not willingly but by reason of hope. What was His hope? That by being exercised to frustration and a sense of hopelessness in the

natural frame we would make ourselves available to God saying, “God, really what was your intent?” God never designed Adam to be successful. That is why He set the Lamb slain as the foundation of the world. He set redemption in place and then set the world in that redemption. The redemption was done and fulfilled and fully funded before the world was made. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That word ‘from’ has a spiritual connotation that is not just time; it is that, but it also has a connotation that is the lamb slain **as** the foundation of the world. The thing that gives the world purpose is redemption; it is not out of itself that the world has purpose. It is vain apart from God. Jesus said, Apart from me you can do nothing. Adam was always intended for Christ, and Christ was always intended for Adam. God was not done in six days; He was just done creating in six days.

On the seventh day, it says that He blessed and sanctified. He was not blessing and sanctifying Himself; He does not need to be blessed. He is holy already; He is the source of sanctification. What else was there? It is not difficult to figure out that the creation is what He was blessing and sanctifying. The exhortation in Hebrews 4 is that we enter in to the seventh day. Why? So we can be blessed and sanctified. We know that Christ is our Sabbath, so he that has ceased from his own works as God did from His has entered into blessing and sanctification by the grace of God. It takes faith to stop working and expect results. Nature does not teach you that you can do nothing and get results. Nature teaches you that if you plant a garden and you leave it alone, you are not going to harvest unless you like chewing on weeds.

Hope. We know that Christ in us is the connection we have with hope. If the expectations of Paul in Ephesians 4 “until” means anything, it is not just that being born again is full hope. It is a measure. If you had a measure of something forty years ago and no experience with it since, hope is not eternal. Hope is conditional. It is anchored in what God produces. Why else would it say, Hope deferred ... without hope aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, instead of citizens who are actively engaged in the laws of the kingdom.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13 that there are three things that remain: the greatest of which, the anchor of which, the source out of which everything else flows is love, hope, and faith. Interestingly enough, faith has access to grace; it is on the same level of grace. You do not access mercy by faith; you access grace by faith. You access mercy by hope. What does a man yet wait for that he already has, but if he is waiting for what he does not have, he will with patience wait for it? That is the definition of hope. We can activate grace, the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through faith, but we can only access mercy by hope. To have faith, you do not have to humble yourself. You have to trust Him you are dealing with, so that



is a relationship. If I acknowledge the King of kings, if I bow my knees to the King of kings, but I retain my crown, I am acknowledging His greatness; but I have not truly humbled myself.

In faith, I can respond to the source of my need. What does it say in Isaiah 30:18? When He is exalted, He now can be merciful. It takes hope to humble yourself. It does not take humility to have faith. Kenneth Hagan is the father of the faith movement. There was nothing humble about that movement. That was “blab it and grab it;” “name it and claim it;” “there's no limit to what your faith can accomplish.” Sometimes faith can be an expression of your pride, but it is going to stop you dead in the water at mercy.

Why is that important? Is grace not enough? Let us talk about mercy for a second. What was our first encounter with mercy? When we were saved. What essentially happened when I was saved, what happened to me was that I did not get what I deserved. That is mercy: I did not get what I deserved. As with grace so also with mercy, we know that grace is that the perfect antidote to the venom of sin. The Judaizers were following Paul around and they were saying, “People are going to use the gospel that you preach as an excuse to continue in sin and say that if grace abounds, then let's let sin abound so grace will abound the more.” I am sure Paul had the thought but it got tempered before he wrote because my thought would be, “Wait a minute, so you're worried that people are going to sin because I preach grace? My gospel is not going to promulgate sin because grace is there. They are already sinning – with both hands, on purpose. You cannot get them to sin more; they are full. “Do you want another pancake?” “I'm not sure I can; I'm full.” “Do you want to sin more?” “I don't know if I can; I'm busy – sinning.” What was their worry? What was their self-image?

If you look in the mirror and you say, “I think I'm okay; I think I'm alright,” the lights probably are not on. When the light of the Spirit hits, you say, “I don't want to look in the mirror today. I already know what I'm going to see.” Is that the real purpose for grace, just to be an antidote to sin? What was Paul's response in Romans when they said, “Let sin abound that grace might much more abound”? He said, “God forbid.” We all know that he was not saying let God forbid sin. That was obvious. The law said, “Don't sin.” What he was saying is, “Don't just use grace as an antidote for sin. You learned grace and its effectiveness because it offset your sins and forgave you of your sins, but the purpose of grace has much more intent than just forgiving your sins. Don't stop there.” That is what he was saying with God forbid. Do not get locked down on this grace – sin thing. Grace is effective; it will always be effective. John wrote to the church and he said, “If you sin and confess it, God will be faithful and cleanse it.” It will never not work. Grace is anti-sin and it is greater than sin. When sin hits it, it vanishes; it is not

removed to some other place. It is not. Grace will always work, but grace is much more than just an antidote for sin. That is what Paul was saying. God forbid that you only use grace as an antidote for sin. Grace has an intent that goes far beyond just solving the sin issue.

This is the same thing with hope and mercy. Our first taste with mercy is that we did not get what we deserved. What is the rest of mercy for? So that we can get what we do not deserve. That is the bigger part of the pie. If the introduction to mercy is that you do not get what you deserve, think what mercy can do if it is unleashed! It does say mercies; He is rich in mercy – Romans 1:12, by the mercies of God. David said, “Great is thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see.” This is sounding like good news.

Who spoke the law to Moses? We know its source was God, but who communicated that covenant? Angels ordained that covenant, and God always has a mediator. It was Moses that mediated the covenant of the law. In Hebrews 2:1, it says, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; (That is the law.) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders?” What did that look like? I think an example of that for me was that very early after the ascension and the apostles began to testify that he was the Messiah, that he died for the sins of the world and that he raised again from the grave. That was the bulk of their gospel. They did not know much more, but what they had seen is what they testified. It says here that God bore them witness with many signs and wonders. The apostles were going into the court of the temple through the gate, and because they were not careful about where the sun was in relation to their bodies, their shadows passed over a paralytic and he was healed. This was not the example of them saying, Silver and gold have I none. They probably did not even know it had happened. This was not, “Stretch forth your hand. Let’s pray into this.” This was a shadow! God was bearing witness to them because they were testifying of Him.

“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.” Here is the point! This is the point; this is the place. “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak?” If He did not put it subject to angels, who did He put it subject to? How did sin come? By man. How is the antidote to sin coming? By man. God always has a mediator. Even though the angels communicated the covenant to Moses, the kingdom of God was not made

subject to them; they were made subject to it. They were made ministers of God to the heirs of salvation. If the word spoken by angels was always justified so that every misdeed received an appropriate recompense or reward, how much more should we listen to the words that are spoken by Son. That is where we came from in the first chapter of Hebrews. Then he says that it is the Son to whom the world to come and the authority and power of that world are made subject to.

We've known for a long time – because God in His graciousness and because of His mercy revealed to us – that there was a company of people who were actually designed and called of God to fully partake of redemption while they're alive and manifest the fact that they finished by a glorified body which God is going to show to the world, somehow. I do not know how that is going to happen. I have imaginations, but He does not have to do it my way. We knew that there is a company of people who is called to be what has been referred to by many names – a man-child company, a first fruit company, who is becoming the first fruits unto God. We have known this, but it is impossible to consider anyone sitting on a throne, placed there by God to govern the world, not just to control it but to solve the dilemmas that are in the world. This is not sending people to jail; this is sending people to heaven. When God destroys His enemies, He does it by redeeming them. He does that because it is not God's will that any should perish. He does not destroy His enemies by sending them into outer darkness; He destroys His enemies by bringing them into the kingdom. There's me! I was His enemy, and He destroyed His enemy by converting me. Well, we are in the process of converting, if so be.

He has subjected to us. It is an interesting concept but let us give it a little bit more substance. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, and when the scribes and the Pharisees found out about it, they plotted to kill him. Essentially, it was not just because he violated the Sabbath but because their position and authority was being shaken by his notability. It was out of competitive, comparative, earthy, self-protective, self-aggrandizing motivation, but nonetheless, they used the agenda of their doctrine that he worked on the Sabbath. As he dialogued with them about that, he said, Let me ask you a question. What was the purpose of the Sabbath? Was the purpose of the Sabbath designed to rule over man or was man designed to be the lord of the Sabbath? In their arrangement, the Sabbath governed the man; in God's purpose, man was designed to govern the Sabbath. When it says that the power of the world to come, we all know that is code for the kingdom of God: for we look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwell righteousness. That is the power of the world to come. It is not just that we get to enter into it and because we were first we get to sit on the throne with some brass

plaque stating, "One of the first. They were first; they get to sit on the throne." We will have had to have partaken and subjected ourselves to the authority of that kingdom in order to be put in authority over that kingdom. We look at situations in our own lives, and we look at situations in our relationships with one another in the church of God, and we are faced with "I don't know what to do. How do I help? It is evident that they are cycling, just not getting anywhere. I want to help them, but I don't know what to do." If that is where I stand at any moment, I am not suitable to put on the throne in order to straighten this world out.

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come? The relationships we've been discussing that are perceived by man as intangible – grace through faith, mercy through hope – are the substance of the kingdom of God; they are the authority of the world to come. These are the benefit of a man subjecting himself to the King. If I do not have an effective encounter with that in my life today before it is an obvious government in the world, how would I be one called out to be prepared ahead of time in order to govern during that time? Isn't that the pattern that God has always used? Moses was forty years old and he got separated by his inappropriate understanding of God's purpose for his life. "I can do this." Forty years later, a burning bush, "Ok, Moses, it's time to go." "Ah, I can't do this." "I know. You are ready." Moses was humbled, not just humiliated. We can be humiliated by circumstances, but it takes an act of our will to humble ourselves. We cannot acknowledge our inadequacy and be stubborn about it because we do not believe.

I wonder how many people have drowned because of fatigue in swimming, not just drowned because they were crushed by a wave, but that they were swimming and just ran out of strength slowly. I wonder if you opened up their hands, if you would find a straw or a small fragment of wood or something that they held onto even though they knew that it wasn't going to keep them afloat but it was all that they could find. That is a pretty good picture: I know that this is not going to sustain me, but it is all that I have. No hope. No faith. Is the authority of the kingdom of the age that is not yet apparent going to show up as something new that never existed before just because the clock ticked to the seventh day? Or has that always been above the veil of vanity just like the sun shining above the clouds? It has always been accessible by faith; it has always been functional by hope. The difference between faith and hope to me is growing up from just a preliminary involvement with God to being involved with God for His purpose.

There are a couple of stories of that Jesus taught, one as a parable. The excitement of the father when he saw his son approaching wasn't just because his

boy was back; it was because he knew that when he returned he was going to live in his father's house for purpose. Part of him coming to himself slopping the hogs was a recognition of what his father was and that even the servants fair better than I because of what he is. He returned to what his father was, not just returned to Daddy. That was an important part of coming to himself, of seeing himself for what he was; it enabled him to see his father's purpose more clearly. What is God's purpose in my life? I can be insulated against the deviation of 'God wants to bless me,' blessing being equal to what the world thinks blessing is – money, fame, fortune; I can be insulated from that if I realize that God blesses what is engaged in His purpose. I cannot just take a word or scripture and link it together through a word study and arbitrary accumulation of doctrines that would lead me to believe that God wants me to prosper even as my soul prospers. So, the blessing of God in my life will yield money, riches, health, wealth, fame. If you accept the premise, it seems to make sense, but when you know the premise is faulty, it makes no sense at all.

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.” There is our start point, but our hope point is that, although we have been made a little lower than the angels, we have had subjected to us the power and the authority of a kingdom that has not yet come. That is anchored in the love of God; that is expressed through the mercy of God: to not just not get what I deserve, but to have the opportunity of partaking of what I cannot possibly earn. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. Go to verse 12 saying, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. – Returning and rest – And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise did the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” All things that pertain unto life and godliness have been made available unto us, not so that we can be presumptive and manipulate them according to our will because that will fail. If we do not use that which God has given us consistent with His purpose, it will not work the way He has designed it to work. In other words, He will not bless it.

Let us go back to two things. One, let us consider James and John going into the Gate Beautiful. Did that miracle happen because of their maturity? Because they were apostles? Because they had prayed up that day? It does not say that. It says that it happened because God was bearing witness to them through many mighty signs and wonders. In fact, we know that they were not mature because Paul came

along with an unveiling of what was in God's heart before He created the worlds, and they said collectively, "What?" They did not get it. Even after Paul spent a fortnight with Peter, because Peter's epistles were written after that, and he said, "Our beloved brother Paul." He testified unnecessarily; he was not forced to include this, but he said, "Who has many things that he teaches and some of them are very difficult to understand." I know that somewhere in the course of fifteen days, Peter said, "Yesterday you said something. Could you run through that again? I'm not sure I quite got it." Otherwise, why would he have written about it? These things actually did take place, so it was not because of their maturity. It was because God had their backs, and that is righteousness, which means that God will bless you and enable you to be more than you have matured to become. I think David spent a lot of time practicing with his sling, but I think that rock had some divine intervention that went past his ability with a sling. The blessing of God: He will bless righteousness as if it was holiness even though it is not holiness yet because it is on the path and it is committed to follow. This is how we are to be a savor of Christ even though we may be a mess – if we are committed to follow and subjected to the King, seeking to be sustained and enabled by His work in us through faith. He will give an accounting that is beyond what we are capable of mustering. There will be a sense about it, a savor. "I don't know what it looks like, but it smells like something different." That is when God has your back; that is righteousness.

We know that this realm of grace and mercy is an area of transition; it is an area of change. It is an area of blessing and sanctification; it is the seventh day; it is Christ. In the realm of grace and faith, it looks more like Adam. In the realm of mercy and hope, it looks more like Jesus because it is growth. It is the expression and transition into maturity. David said concerning blessing, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." That is the first step of mercy – you do not get what you deserve. Then he said, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will impute righteousness." See there is the graduation to a further expression. There is blessing part one and part two which are the beginning of sanctification.

What do you think is the influence of sanctification in our lives? Who is the sanctifier? The Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies. The circumcision of the heart without hands is the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are sanctified by the on-going expression of trust in and yieldedness to the Holy Spirit. If you give him free course, the authority by which he operates, the authority by which you allow the power of the world to come (which has been subjected to you), the way you rule over it, is not be saying, "I pray that ..." It's not commanding it. The way you activate it is by acknowledging the need and

making yourself available to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes holy. That is all he does; he does not know how to do anything else. If you let him do what he wants to do, that is what he always does. So it says that if you sow to the Spirit, it cannot fail; it will always work. Just as surely as grace is the antidote for sin, the Holy Spirit is the source of sanctification.

These things have been established in our experience; we have testimony to these things. We have tasted of the good word of God and the power of the world to come. We need to recognize that that same power that we have tasted of has been subjected to us. It is not reigning over us; it is there to serve us. However, we do not reign over it unless we are subjected to the King. What that looks like is not just acknowledging that He is a great King, but acknowledging that I am not a king. It is okay to sing, "He is King of kings," but when we acknowledge Him, let's take our crown off. Let's not bow carefully so that we do not dislodge our crown. Let's just toss it. He wants to give us our inheritance. Do you know what our inheritance is? HIM. That I do not have it means that I am hindering that in some way. That needs to be cured. For those who are successful, they will fulfill everything that we have ever heard, and it will go far beyond anything that we have heard so far – what God will do for them that love Him.

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