

The Harvest

I'm not sure how you read the gospels, but in reading the gospels and thinking about the stories concerning the life of Jesus, it's becoming more and more a mindful part of that reading and thinking that he said the same as I do and greater shall ye do. There is a significant testimony and that is the reason that Jesus was birthed as Christ – the only man who has been birthed as Christ by first birth, and I think the only man that ever will be birthed as Christ by first birth. It was obviously a unique characteristic and purpose for which God brought forth Jesus in the earth through the joining of the Holy Spirit and Mary. The testimony was unique up until that time, but he said it's not going to stay unique. It's not designed to remain unique. We certainly have seen many things that even preceded him that were characteristic of things that he did during a 3 ½ year ministry to Israel because we are aware from the stories of scripture that, prior to Jesus raising Lazarus or Tabitha or healing, there had been a demonstration of God's capacity through man to heal and to raise the dead. There was a uniqueness in the things that Jesus did, not because he did something that had never been done before but because he lived a life that had never been lived before. He lived that life to the fullest expression of that life, so he didn't just start and not finish.

He came to a point during his ministry and his declaration to the disciples – about 3 ½ years into that demonstration – where he said I'm not going to speak with you often anymore. There was only one miracle that he did from that point forward as far as I can see. That was when he restored Malchus' ear after Peter severed it from his head. It wasn't because he didn't do miracles because somehow there was some anointing to do miracles, signs and wonders that had lifted, but it was because there was a constraining of that power that was evidenced through the miracles on his life to do something that was greater than the expression of the miracles.

We certainly have lived in a relationship with our brethren in the church both in today's time and in prior times, thinking of John G. Lake or Sister Ettinger and others, that were a marked demonstration of God's power through man to heal and to raise the dead. I don't know if you have ever laid hands on somebody and seen God raise them from the dead. I personally have not but I have heard testimonies of people that I know who have. I have prayed for people and seen them healed. I have prayed and been healed by God. We certainly have context to the power of God to affect natural events to a limited exposure. When Jesus said, How am I straitened until this be fulfilled, the word there in the English is

“accomplished,” but he was talking about the completion of his course. The testimony of who he was was completed. Nobody believed it, nobody saw it really for what it was, nobody saw him for who he was, nobody saw how it was that he lived. When the disciples wanted to see the father, he said, “If you had seen me.” He didn’t say “when” you see me. He said, “If you had seen me.” The subtext of that is: Although you have seen my body, although you have seen what I’ve done and although you have heard my words, you don’t really see the dependency out of which I live.

Paul was a season into his experience of Christ, having had an epic encounter that left him blind, being introduced to Jesus, and yet subsequent to that – probably at some point during his Arabian desert experience, but regardless of when it was after his encounter on the road to Damascus – he had to learn that he was going to live as Christ. If the power of Christ was going to rest upon him, he had to glory in his weakness. He had to rejoice in his infirmity. He had to own his inadequacy. This is a conflict to Adam. It is so contrary. I am going to use the word “diametric.” It’s constantly, continually and completely opposed to that which man is: Adam by first birth.

I had thought from some of the early encounters I had with teaching in the church that God would not violate what apparently is also taught as the free-will of man, and then I read the story of Jonah. Some of the doctrines we have had don’t stand up to even the stories of the Old Testament, never mind the revelation of the new. God is in Christ seeking to reconcile all things to himself. There is an aspect of that reconciliation which means he has got to tear down what’s there because Adam would rather die than yield. God doesn’t want to destroy Adam. He didn’t make him for destruction; he made him for glorification and the resolution of what is so apparently a conflict. I face the conflict in me. We’re not just talking Biblical, doctrinal concepts of conflict. We’re not talking about the centuries of argument in the church between various approaches to Christ and the understanding of truth. God is able to resolve those things, but he resolves them in Christ, and it’s through the work of his spirit.

The conflict isn’t resolved by us being born again. There’s a sense in which the conflict is just being properly addressed. I know so many saints that are born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit who are anticipating penalty because they don’t see that they are really worthy. They labor under the sense of not being worthy although having been baptized – as it says in first Corinthians and Galatians – into Christ. If you have been baptized, you’ve been baptized into Christ. This is something that (on the other side of the coin) the Apostle John said, “Now are we.” We are already the sons of God even though what we see doesn’t

look like it's a finished product. If we're going to take this by faith, if we're going to let our faith be the connective tissue to things that are not seen, one of the primary encounters that we must resolve in our lives is that we are worthy, that God has reconciled Adam to himself in Christ and that God has reconciled you to himself by second birth. You don't need to be reconciled. You have been reconciled if you have been made partaker of Christ. There is no more Christ that you can partake of.

When Jesus was born, swaddled, lying in a manger, they came and worshipped. He was no less Christ and when he was hanging on a tree or being raised out of the grave and saying, "Mary," she didn't recognize him at that point. He did not look like Messiah when he had to have his diapers changed. He looked like a baby. He looked no different than any other baby, and yet when he was brought to be presented as the first born at the temple, there was a priest who had a promise from God and he looked at that baby and he recognized Christ. What an amazing thing. If you and I were told that we would see Christ, that we would see Messiah before we died, we would have a picture of somebody that is distributing bread out of one loaf with 12 baskets left, looking around and saying, "I guess I can quit breaking it. We have enough now; we have more than enough, now." Or we would anticipate seeing somebody who comes across the lake without a boat. That's kind of the way I would think, but there was an anointing upon this event whereby he saw Christ as a baby. Then, a woman – who obviously couldn't be a priest and I don't even know if she was a Levite – who began to prophesy when she saw this child. I think it's important that we see the Christ in one another even though it is an indistinct form. I think it's more important that we recognize that we're accepted and that our acceptance is the evidence that we have been reconciled and that we are now worthy, and it isn't because of anything we do; it's in spite of what we've done. It's established on the back of what he did for us.

In Luke 4:42: When it was day, he departed and went into a desert place and the people saw him, found him and enjoined him that he should not depart from them. Don't leave us. He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent. He preached in the synagogues of Galilee. John, in the 1st chapter of his gospel, said that he was the light. He brought an illumination; he brought a focus to God's purpose out of what had been in the disorientation of the law and those things that were external through the things that he said and the way that he lived more importantly – because that's really what gave power to the words that he spoke – that he was living what he was preaching. He was living in the kingdom of God while he was here in the world, and the words that he had referencing the kingdom of God were not only accurate but they had a

power that went past the accuracy that was spoken. It convicted men and they remarked, "We've never heard it this way, in this manner before." His testimony wasn't to change the world. His testimony was to harvest some out of the world. He said I'm going to make you guys fishers of men because that's what I'm doing.

He spoke to the woman at the well and he said the father seeks those who will worship him differently than the law but will worship him in truth and in spirit. My opinion from 50 years of being fished is that what that truth refers to isn't primarily accurate doctrine or proper encounter with the scriptures, but it's the integrity and the honesty of the presentation. The *Song of Songs* starts early in the first chapter with the pronouncement of the Shulamite, and she says what I just said but she said it this way, "I am black but comely." She didn't have any problem from the beginning when she talked about her beloved expressing her love for him, but it took a while for her to reconcile that she belonged to him. "I am my beloved's, his banner over me is love. I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me. I am my beloved's and he is mine." He has given himself. God has given himself to us in Christ and not just limited to Jesus coming to the planet but us being joined to that life in order that we be fully reconciled to the will and to the purpose of God.

The 53rd chapter of Isaiah and the first verse, the prophet said, Who will trust what is revealed? It has to start here. I have to own, I have to be joined to, I have to embrace and accept what God has done because I'm not being joined to something that's a work in progress; I'm the work in progress in order to be joined to something that is already finished. This journey is to appoint that it is already predetermined. The context that I have with this is faith. By faith, the elders received a report concerning things not seen. By faith, we know that the very worlds and the substance that this world is was made out of things that did not already exist, and the testimony of this natural universe is to the capacity and the power of a God who is the God.

Roman 1:20 testifies that the unseen things – the things that cannot be seen, the things that aren't substance concerning our reference from this world – are a testimony to his Godhead and to his power, that he is a creative being. It doesn't say that if we look at nature long enough we will understand God completely. That is not what it means. That's an aberration or an indistinct representation by an unspiritual perspective and a bad teaching. It does give us a reference point that if a God could organize this world and put an adversarial parasite on it called Adam with a provision that was so excessive that in spite of Adam expressing his adversarial construct to even the laws of nature there would be an ongoing provision for man's existence because God's supply is not scant; it is

abundant. If time were to continue under this authority that we live in at this time, man would destroy all life on this planet just by being Adam. In spite of the carefulness with which God ordered the natural creation in a way that everything that man needed would be here before man was put here, man would destroy the very orderliness and provision of God and himself in the process. How incompatible can Adam be? It's not reconcilable except in Christ. God is in Christ reconciling all things unto himself whether they be in heaven or in earth. All things.

You know we look at the heavens from earth's reference and we go, "Boy, they are beautiful. Angels." Satan was cast to earth so the conflict is out of heaven in that sense, but the natural man can't even live in harmony with the earth never mind the heavens. I've known several people who said, "Well, we're looking for the perfect church." I said, "If you find it and join, it won't be." That's Adam's testimony. I have a friend who has testified against participating with any order of worship regardless of where it might be found to the point where he has already condemned all people who come together in order to do whatever their idea is of worship. He said, "The church is a habitation for those who don't do what they say they believe. Hypocrites. Hypocrisy reigns in the church." I said, "Well, I do have two comments. First of all, if you want to find an organization that doesn't have hypocrisy in it, join something that doesn't stand for anything." God has committed himself to man to reveal before he does, so we're always going to see more than what we are because this is about going forward.

The high priest on the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Atonement, went into the Holiest of All and he did not go in for the forgiveness of sins past. He went in to anchor the covenant through the law so that the sacrifices offered the next year would be valid. He went to assure the blessing of God for the next year not for the past one. Even in the law, this is testimony that God wants to move forward, but he is waiting. Isaiah 30, "Therefore will the Lord wait that he might be gracious." What is he waiting on? Obviously, not waiting on time. God looks at the past in his windshield and the future in his rearview mirror. I mean time is collapsed; there is no time for God. Although he is in time, he is not hampered or hindered or limited to time, so his sense of waiting isn't time-oriented; it's condition-oriented. God wants to divine man. The testimony of one that was born of a virgin without sin did not get the job done. His purpose of getting this done in me is that I recognize that God has placed a value upon some responding through the confidence of faith to believe what is not yet seen. The evidence of that trust in what is not seen is hope.

If there is a dearth in the church, if there is a lack in the church, if there is a fault in the mass of Christianity, it's not faith – although that is also risky if you go looking for faith. It says, when he returns, will he find faith in the earth? It didn't say, if he returns, he will find faith in the earth because there's always those few. Two out of 600,000 that left Egypt over 20 years old in men entered in. Few – but we do know this: that because God is not bounded by time, that he will never start something that he knows isn't going to come to completion. If he has started something in your life, he will bring it to completion. His completion isn't limited by time and distance, so there have been a lot of people who have been born again, baptized in the Holy Ghost, moved in gifts, callings, anointings, and ministries who didn't finish in their natural lifetime. Does that make God a liar? Does that mean he is like the one that Jesus taught concerning someone who began a construction project and didn't count the cost to what it was going to take to finish and became a proverb in his country and people mocked? "What an idiot; he started something that he couldn't finish." I mean would Jesus have taught that parable if his father was suspect of that?

We don't have hope in this world only. The whole purpose of being born again is so that we are not of the earth but that we are born not of blood, not of the will of men, not of the will of the flesh but of God. It's that we have been joined to the kingdom of God though yet here, and there is nothing that can separate us. Do you remember the things on that list? Death. Was death on the list? I thought it was. Do we believe in God, that he can raise the dead? What does physical death have to do with salvation? Nothing. It won't catapult us into spiritual maturity; it won't limit us from following God by the Holy Spirit in Christ. I mean we can't take it both ways. We can't have doctrines that are archaic and rooted in that which is visual and earth-oriented and still believe in a God of resurrection. Jesus told his disciples on at least two occasions that are written in this book, They are not dead. A third reference – Tabitha, she's not dead. They laughed. Lazarus, he's not dead. He stinks. Adam's always got a reason that is earthbound why the word of God can't be true. God is wanting to revolutionize you. He is wanting to turn you upside down and shake, not only everything that's of the earth so that you don't think "dead" is dead but that which is of the heavens, the provision of God for going forward. We look at the heavens and they are pristine; they're beautiful; there are angels and harps and wonderful music and obedience because the disobedient angels got thrown out. (Actually, they threw themselves out in a sense. They couldn't dwell in that place with disobedience in them.) So, there is that which must be reconciled in me if I'm going to dwell, and we have been seated in heavenly places in Christ.

Hope. What is distinctive about hope? It makes not ashamed; that's the exit of hope. What is the entrance of hope? The hope of glory is that it makes not ashamed. The entrance of hope is that we wait with patience. For that which a man does not have – what he anticipates receiving – he will with patience wait. It's a "w" word with four letters but it's not "work"; it's "wait." We are his workmanship. What is being worked is what we have confidence in by trust of what we know that isn't seen, so we trust the witness of what isn't seen to become substance. Where? It's going to take place in us.

What's the mystery involved in this? Why is God hanging his future on someone that was born in sin and shapened in iniquity? Why doesn't he flash out of heaven and snap his fingers? Why is God doing this by man? We have testimony early in Romans that by man came sin, by man also the resurrection of the dead, but Jesus said that's not enough. There are greater things that must be accomplished to fulfill the purpose of my father and his program that is organized according to his good pleasure. Why has he limited himself so? Why was the smallest habitation in town where God lived in the camp of Israel? 10 x 10 x 10. Why has he hidden himself? Why are the things of God obscure? Why do we have to hope instead of seeing?

Seeing can be hope if we see by the spirit, but I'm talking about sight. Why did Paul say to people who were essentially not blind physically that the eyes of their understanding be opened? So that they might have a relationship with what has been imbedded by God prior to creation as the purpose that he had which is called the mystery of godliness. What is man that he is included in your program? Because God's very existence in the expression of what God is is redemptive, and our encounter with redemption so far is that when I was dead in trespasses and sin, I was quickened by the Holy Spirit and brought out of death into life. I have been brought to be a testimony. I have been brought to be a witness. Certainly, we have seen the witness of the born-again gospel proliferate because of the testimony and evangelism and people being born again because of the testimony, and people being baptized in the spirit because of the testimony, and people encountering the gifts of the spirit because of the testimony. However, this world is still locked up and in bondage, and the church – by in large – is still limited from an exposure to what they have already had access to.

Baptized into Christ. Hope. The word patience is a word that is not primarily time-oriented. It doesn't give the context of a refrigerator magnet that says, Lord give me patience but hurry. The word patience is rooted, the etymology, the origins of that word are rooted in staying under. Owning who I am, owning what I do, owning what I don't do,

yet having hope so that I become the workmanship of the spirit of God. I saw a little placard in a house that I was staying in not long ago. It says, When I go to bed at night, I give God all my troubles because he is going to be up anyhow. It's cute. Honestly, God doesn't want your troubles. When it says cast all your cares on him, it doesn't mean that you are giving your troubles to him. It means that you have given yourself to him. God is not into conflict resolution. Jesus didn't say I'm coming to bring peace. He said I'm bringing a sword. I'm going to cause you to confront the difficulty that Adam is and the resonance and the residual effect of living in this world of this world to a high-definition perspective in your life. We can't make up the ground by what we do. It's not possible. One of the implications of the effects of living in hope is that we're suspending our energy as a source and we are staying under the context of what God has already brought to us so that we are following on to know Christ fully, or as Paul said, rather, that we would be fully known of him. That I might know as I am known of him.

If you don't have honesty in your relationship with the Lord, if you haven't owned yourself, you can't be honest with him. My honesty with the Lord doesn't educate him. He knows before, but what it does say is here is somebody that is willing to worship me in spirit and truth instead of trying to earn what I have already given him – something that takes us out of the frame of the power of God. What if Abraham on Mount Moriah, having his attention drawn to the ram said, I was believing that you were going to raise him up and went ahead and slit his throat instead of taking the provision? What if he had been where Moses was when he killed the Egyptian and he actually killed his son because he was that far out of frame with God and God's ways? Could we please stop trying to be good? I'm not excited about people trying to be bad. That isn't the option to stop trying to be good. The option to both is to trust the ongoing work of that which has already proven itself to us to be irrational, outrageously abundant, and contrary to the principles by which this world is governed. We are being harvested.

I'm going to turn to Hebrews the fifth chapter. I want to take just a minute to rehearse how we got to the fifth chapter because we came to the fifth chapter through the first, second, third, and fourth chapters; so this is the *Reader's Digest* version of the *Cliff's Notes*, highly compressed. The word that God is speaking to us now is not prophetic; it's a better word than the prophetic word, and what he is speaking to are not angels because, although we don't look as good as the angels, we are actually provisioned far more substantially than the angels to the extent that they – who have a better resonance in relationship with what isn't seeing because they basically spend most of their lives not seeing – desire to look into that which has been presented to us. It's kind of funny; they are envious. They

have a desire to see and participate with what we have even though they're not hampered by some of the same limitations that we are exposed to. This is just ongoing testimony that there is a capacity that God has invested in Christ, that we can allow to work in us the measure. Ephesians 4 says that to everyone is given grace according to the measure. It's an interesting thought. Grace isn't an entity that you 'got it' or you 'don't got it'. You get it by measure. He giveth more grace is another indication of that.

He says that the measuring of grace is according to the gift of Christ. That's kind of opaque as well. What is the gift of Christ? To the measure that you receive what is given. The measure, that which we make room to receive. As you have received, so walk and be rooted and grounded in trust. It's interesting the dialogue that the author of Hebrews runs into before he gets to the fifth chapter. There are two significant things that I want to point out just really, really quickly. One is that he speaks to angels and we have pictures of things that he has spoken to angels. We know two events concerning the life of Jesus which God interacted with Joseph angelically and he said, Take the child to Egypt; Herod wants to kill him. An angel. When Herod died – I don't know if it was the same angel – but he sent an angel to Joseph and said, Ok, the one who was seeking his death is dead so take him back; but don't take him to Bethlehem. Take him to Nazareth and it happened. God sent the angel and the angel did what God said. Hebrews says, To which of the angels at any time did he ever say, 'Sit down because I'm going to make all your enemies your footstool'? He never said that to any angel at any time. He said a lot of things to angels. He sent a death angel down to destroy the first born to liberate and pry Israel out of Egypt, but he never said to an angel at any time... But, it is what he said to you. "Sit until..." Stay under. When you sit down, you are under. You have to be under to have things put under you. This was the amazement with which Jesus looked at the centurion. He said I wish Israel had your trust. They don't get it. They are all trying to govern. They are all trying to rule, whether it's one another or themselves or both; but you realize power comes by submission. What a great lesson. Staying under and investing in and accepting, making room for.

Then, the fourth chapter which validates the whole concept and is the foundation for the fifth chapter, says, "Some must..." It just says "some." It remaineth therefore and some must enter into the rest by ceasing from man. Being harvested out of the earth. Look at the tension in the first verse of the fifth chapter which begins to introduce the whole purpose for the book (which is priesthood) and the influence of the fourth chapter going into this first verse and it says, "taken from... Every high priest is taken from among men." We know by the seventh chapter that he is not talking about the Levitical priesthood or the

first covenant, but it does say every high priest. You know who Melchizedek was. He was king of righteousness and priest of the most high God. Which came first? Righteousness. What is righteousness rooted in? Trust.

Paul said, I have a testimony concerning my brothers and according to the flesh that they have a great zeal and focus for God. Their whole life is framed by it. They walk into their houses and they have the law inscribed there. They sit down, they rise up, they go, they live, they trust in the law but it's according to knowledge. It's not according to a proper relationship with God himself. They hold God at arm's length by their own law and performance of the law. You know we could retranslate the rich, young ruler's petition to Jesus, and we could say, instead of him asking about eternal life, he could have been saying, Master, how can I be joined to God? That is eternal life, right? That they may know me and the only true God. No man comes to God except by his son. No man knows the father but the son. He could have been asking, How can I be joined to God? I've kept the law. Jesus said, Ok, not worth a lot but let's move forward. There's the zeal. The kid has got 'want to'. That was all that was worth. Jesus didn't blink; he didn't argue with him. Are you sure you love God with all your heart, all your soul and your neighbor as yourself? Do you hear the law? Jesus said, Ok, good. Let's move on. There's more. If you want to be joined to God, there's more. This is what we face. This is why we are being harvested.

We're being harvested from the earth where we're being taken from among men and there's one purpose this is being done for. It's very difficult to believe. We're being harvested by God through the spirit to be a priest to this world. Where is my proving ground for priestliness? If it can't work here in me, it won't work out there and it cannot be brokered for the world. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for man in things pertaining to God. That's the reason we're being harvested. It isn't being weaned so we can go through the disorganization and distress of having our pacifiers taken from us. He isn't doing this for suffering's sake. He is harvesting. He is pulling us out of what we're comfortable with, what we were born in, what's natural to us; but it's so he can anchor us and bring us substance and a testimony to life that has been willing to be harvested from the earth and find an authority that is based on its relationship with God in real time, not just the book. If you and I will allow God to work a fulfillment of this Bible in our lives by the spirit, not according to knowledge but according to staying under, if we will come under his purpose by offering ourselves, we will be made mature.

I realized some time ago that when I came to God on purpose, it was still for my purpose. I came on purpose and there was an evidence in my life that I was harvested from

everything that had been framed before that. I left geography, I left family, I left education, I left, I left, I left. I was being harvested but I don't know if you noticed the things I listed. They were all outside and the reason I came to God on purpose was for my purpose. I still have to be harvested from that. Quite honestly, I'm being harvested from that so that I'm enjoined to his purpose on purpose but for his purpose not for mine. Our ordination, our authority is not by a hierarchical religious order. That's a temporary thing. We could take the time to go to Ephesians 4, and we could look at it and the most important verse in Ephesians 4 (in my way of thinking about it for us right now) which is the beginning of the 13th verse where it says "until." All of that is established of God but just like the law, it was a temporary thing and it did serve a purpose; but it wasn't that it would be eternal but that it would serve an eternal purpose. The five-fold ministry and the order that we have is not an eternal thing but it is for an eternal purpose. The demographic for it is the word "until".

Coming out of 1st Corinthians 13 or maybe even the last part of 1st Corinthians 13, establishing the anchor of God's heart – that chapter really isn't how we should love, you know, although it's maybe taken that way. It's really a description of God. It's a comprehensive picture of God – do you know it says there that he endures all things? Why would you think that you have to fund this if he endures all things? God is the will for good, for all, at all times that aren't him at his expense. That's what it takes to endure all things: that you're the one who can reconcile, you're the one that can make up the difference for what is not yet and that you have intent to make it. And he hopes all things, so he will not force you. He will mess with your will, but that isn't force; that's love. He will not make you something that you do not welcome; that's force. He will not birth a life in you that you do not see the need for and accept. We've been partakers of Christ, but to fulfill this priesthood, we have to be made partakers of God, not just the white stone with a new name. The one who authored the letters said that he received a new name. As far as I know, he is still referred to as Jesus. The nature that he was talking about – and he was birthed as Christ – he had to receive a new one. Remember that the authority that's in Christ is God. It was not Jesus doing a favor for daddy; it was Jesus giving full attention and focus to the provision of losing his life in order to stay under his father that it would be God reconciling the world. In Acts 20:28 it says that God purchased his bride with his blood. It was God's blood, with the life of God manifested in Jesus, but it was Jesus's dependency upon God that made it work.

Follow on. That which you have believed is substance. Being joined to it is by hope. Experiencing it. It says hope is that which enters into those things that are yet within the veil and not seen, that that we trust is there even though we haven't seen it yet. The hour

is one where many are letting go. It doesn't mean they lose wherewith they have come to. You can't get unborn-again again, but you can walk unworthy of the calling. The worthiness isn't doing right; the worthiness is just acknowledging God in your life today, presenting yourself honestly to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit and seeing God reconcile you to himself.

The last thing I want to say about that in the 5th verse is: they are ordained for men having been harvested from men unto God; they are ordained for men by that which they bring that they have found in God. God's interest is to make a plain declaration of his purpose in the earth. It is not going to be by a better message. It's going to be by a better messenger. There is a priest that must rise that's based on a vow not on a commandment. The commandment says you must do this. The vow says, "I will do this."

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