

OUR ALTAR

There's really only one object of God's affection and that's Christ. And so, what Jesus said to his disciples was, It is expedient to you that I leave because I haven't been able to teach you anything so far. You haven't understood anything I have said; you haven't known me although you have been with me for three and half years. So, when I clear out, the Holy Spirit can come and teach you all things that pertain to me and he will be in you. There is Christ; that's the class; the Holy Spirit is the professor, and it's up to us to pay attention because Christ is the sum of all of God's thought. Christ is the expression of what was in God before the world began. If we were to consider that a lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, who was it that pulled the knife across its throat? God was providing himself a sacrifice. It's the foundation that gives everything that is time and distance meaning. Not only is Christ the compression and the fullness of all of God's thought toward man, but it's also what allows eternity to have an effect on that which is in time. It's the bridge, the way, the means and the purpose of God.

I want to look at Romans, the eighth chapter. When we consider that the lamb was slain before the worlds were made, rather than the atonement or the provision or the sacrifice being for the man, it was actually the man who was made suitable for the atonement. If you are really wealthy – I mean really, really wealthy – instead of going to a store and buying a suit of clothes, you have a team of tailors come in and they fit the cloth to you. It's really a better way if you can afford it. The end result looks better, but, of course, it costs a lot more. That is really the picture of the salvation of God. The salvation of God has been fit and contoured for each one of us in a particular, personal application because it's by the Holy Spirit that is in us that what is Christ is worked and formed.

Paul said, "I labor; should I travail again in birth till Christ be formed in you?" By what? What do you mean "formed"? I thought it was "birthed". It was birthed, but it has to be formed. The ongoing work of the Spirit that quickened the life of Christ in you is what it takes for that life to come to full stature. Our calling – being born again, being baptized in the Holy Spirit, moving through the feasts of Israel's agricultural year – is to actually become the fullness of Christ. We could turn to Ephesians four, but I hope everybody is aware of that verse that we have been given an intermediate ministry, a five-fold Spirit ministry and nine Spirit gifts (There are actually more than nine, but that's the quote.), and that provision is made to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That

ministry is given until... It is a temporal provision; it is not the goal. It's the facilitator, and the goal is that we would grow up into him who is the head in all things. That we would come to that life and the expression of that life that he lived while he was here because the place of full stature as Christ is the platform from which he stepped off that which was temporal and took up residence in that which is eternal. This verse relates to what we are talking about so far when it says God imbedded in what he created an inherent, instinctual desire to see the manifestation of the full purpose of God. It says it is the earnest expectation of the creation to see the manifestation of the sons of God. The nineteenth verse, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waits..." It doesn't have a choice. It can't do anything of itself, so it has to wait. It's locked up. It's imprisoned; it's captured based on what it was created as until there is a manifestation of the sons of God. This word manifestation. When we can look at the pattern son, when was he manifested? Was it when he was twenty-two? He had a manifested son ministry when he was thirty, but who saw him? Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "If you had known me, you would have known the Father." It was "if you had known me..." The implication is that you did not know me and you still don't know me, so I have to send the Holy Spirit who will be in you and will teach you all things that pertain unto me because you are not going to get this from the outside in.

Which of the parables did they ever get right? What Jesus said – the red letters in this book – are the fulfillment of a prophecy in Isaiah when God said, "I will speak to them in dark sayings so that when they hear, they won't understand." So, he had to explain the parables to them, and embarrassingly enough (although it's not recorded in the letter of the word), even when he explained it, they didn't understand the explanation. It was the Spirit that came and dwelled in them that brought them from being those that didn't understand, who had an instinctive response to the life that they witnessed to in him and the anointing that was on him, that revolutionized them to turn the world upside down.

When he was on his way to his physical death, in spite of Peter's protestation (representing the rest of their voices because they weren't bold enough to say it), "I'll never leave you; I'll go with you even unto death." Ah, Peter. "By the time the cock crows tomorrow you will have denied me three times." You don't know what is in you; you don't know the limitations. You don't know the captivity that you are in. You think you can do and go where you want to go, but you have no understanding of how this really works. We have come as a people to a place where we have had opened unto us an opportunity to step through into an expanse, a provision, and thereby become formed through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit

to something that the world has never, ever seen yet. So, in case you think they saw him; they didn't see him, not as he was. They saw a man. They followed him. They recognized the anointing. They said, Well, where would we go? You're the only one that talks like this. But they didn't see him for what he was. They didn't see him in weakness. They didn't see him in dependency. They didn't see what formed him during those eighteen years of obscurity when he was crying out to his Father, "Save me!" It said, "loud crying and tears unto him who was able to save him."

He had to be saved. He had to be formed. He was born Christ, but he had to come to the full stature of what he was born as. It took the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. It says, "What is it but that he that ascended first descended..." This is not talking about him coming through Mary's womb to earth. This was him taking an embarrassing view of himself and his own limitation and subjecting himself in humility to the work of his Father.

Look at the difference between twelve and thirty. We may not have a high-definition view of what happened during those eighteen years, but we can certainly see the difference over a period of time. When he went into those eighteen years, subjecting himself to his parents, he was "doing". "Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business? I've got stuff to do, Mom." He knew who his father really was. He understood the scriptures like no one that was on the planet at that time, but the knowledge of what God is saying and who you are is not enough to be a fully manifested son because light, as important as it is, is not life. Light is the testimony to the life. He came to this world as light. In him was life. Paul, testifying to that same relationship, said, it was God in Christ reconciling. The life that was in Christ was God. He was the testimony to God; that made him the light. He came to not declare himself. Even in the resurrection, nobody saw him for what he was. Mary looked at him right in the face. How long had it been since she had seen him? Three days? Four days? A week? She thought he was the gardener. We don't get the picture of why that distortion was there, but we do see it on the road to Emmaus because we are told plainly in the scripture that their eyes were holden so that they would not know him. They were fishing and they saw this figure on the bank, and they talked among themselves thinking it was a spirit. Somebody caught an initiative and said, "It's the Lord." But it was a conclusion; it wasn't the initial thought.

The incredible, unbelievable testimony Isaiah brought to the unlikeliness and impossibility of this, saying, "Who has believed our report?" Paul said, "Eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard," and it can't be approached by that which is natural, that

which God has and intends to reveal. We have had this concept from a natural viewpoint of scripture that God does what he does on a unilateral basis, and that is our concept of sovereignty. Our concept of sovereignty is God doing independently of any other agency that which is his will. But I can't find that in the book. Once you clear the first six days of Genesis, God's doing everything by man. (The account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a little bit dicey: you could flip a coin over that, but after Sodom and Gomorrah – because even then he still talked with his friend about it. He wasn't holding it separate in his own counsel. He said, "Should I do this thing without talking with my friend?") The creature, the creation is waiting for some, somewhere, at sometime to step up and become the first manifestation of the purpose of God that was in his heart before the foundation of the world.

The twenty-third verse, "We, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves." You know, something has happened to me quite a few times in my life when there was a hunger, a stirring, something that set aside everything that was around me, everything that I had, everything that I was involved in, and said, "God, there's got to be more." It was not a doctrinal apprehension of what "more" might be. I went up to a resort in New Hampshire and a brother looked across the table at me and said, "I think you're ready." I said, "I think so; for what?" He said, "Well, the baptism of the Holy Spirit." He looked at me like "duh." I "duh-ed" him back. "What's that?" I didn't know what the baptism of the Holy Spirit was, but there was something here that was saying, "I can't leave where I'm at; I can't stop doing what I'm doing because I feel that's what God would have me do. But I am not by any means content." I don't think that I have ever been more aware in my life than I am today that there must be a going forwardness to the work and purpose of God through the Spirit in my life. In case anybody has any question, let me just solve it or at least address it: I need to be changed. The change I need most today isn't a glorified body. The change I need most today is for a hunger to come to a fullness and a focus and a narrowing; separation might be a good term.

Waiting for the adoption. The term there is "son placing," *uihotesia*, and that means "the redemption of the body," that we would have a glorified body like unto his, not being unclothed (which means we don't have to die to get it) but to be clothed upon and transfer from being limited, dependent to being the source. You talk about light taking place at "the big bang." The world has seen nothing like what they are going to see because the glory of the latter always eclipses. In fact, it eclipses it by such an extent that it makes the former look as if it didn't have any.

This word “firstfruits” of the Spirit. If you track it, it says it is the “beginning of sacrifice.” In my beginnings of encountering sacrifice, it was a provision that was made for me by another. So, he, in due time, gave himself, the just for the unjust. And while I was yet a sinner, Christ died. At one point I was his enemy and he destroyed an enemy by quickening me to life in his son. That method of destruction by God of his enemies is the early stage redemption. It is the beginning of sacrifice. The firstfruits of the Spirit in my life was that I was quickened from the dead, and the evidence of that (although I didn’t know it at the time) was that my sins were forgiven and I was given a standing before God on the basis of what I wasn’t and what I couldn’t perform and accomplish. The righteousness of that standing, Paul describes in Romans 4, is without works. I didn’t make it up, but I was happy to partake of it, and I am happy to stand on that foundation today because, based on my merits, what is inherent within me yet, I have no right to stand here and talk to you. I must be changed. The ongoing work of salvation in my life must progress until I grow up through that change on a day-to-day basis as a result of my offering by my presenting myself to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit until I am like him in every way.

This is a most unnatural process. The testimony of this process starts in something that cannot be derived in the earth. You can scour the earth through all of history and all of geography and you will never find a culture that has its roots based in forgiveness of the guilty. The affinity of nature, the law of this world, is eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. So, the righteousness and the fact that my sins are forgiven have been accounted to me and the righteousness of that accounting (as bad as a CPA would ever go through the facts and come to that conclusion) was because there was blood shed on my behalf. That which was testified under the law of Moses when a lamb could die for a man as long as he didn’t pick one of the bad two sins. (You know, if you picked your sins wisely, you could survive this.) Even the law had a glory. It had a testimony of the going forwardness of God’s purpose that there would be a lamb, and the lamb would be a better lamb and it would have a better life, and it would bring a better sacrifice and it would function as a better solution so that the forgiveness wouldn’t just be for the act. This lamb also talked and he said, Look, I’m still on page with Moses; you shouldn’t kill people; however, if you hate, you’re guilty. And he took the atonement from being something that was only designed to function for an activity and brought it in to function for a condition – that the inside could be forgiven, that the actual righteousness that I have before God, because of the sacrifice of another, was that I can stand before God in spite of my condition. This is really nice! But when I look at my brother, I realize that he did not just take advantage of the source of his life being the Holy

Spirit in Mary's womb, that although he was born without sin to a virgin (as unique a birth as that ever was), he didn't rest on that basis. He didn't take that as being special although it was, but he invested the specialness in an ongoing work of the evidence of the Holy Spirit. It talks in Hebrews 7 about Jesus not being influenced by the commandment of a carnal application of justice to a carnal world in order to suppress the flood of iniquity but by the oath that was based in God himself. The conclusion of that in verse twenty-two was that by so much, by an oath of God saying, I will do this, he was made a surety of a better testament.

I'm going to refer to a couple of verses that have this same word "made" in them, but I want to define that word in terms of scripture because in the first chapter of the gospel of John, the twelfth verse, it says, "As many as received Christ, to those who received him, God has given the authority to become." That word "to become" is *genomai* in the Greek. It is the same word that is used here – *genomai* – to be made, to become, to become something by being made, to become something that you weren't until you were made. Now he could not be made Christ; he was born Christ. What was he made? We are in the seventh chapter of Hebrews. There's a big clue there. He was made surety, but he was made surety because he was made a priest. Hebrews is many things but it is especially the record of a man being made a priest. It tracks the path of the priesthood under Levi all the way through the fifth chapter when it talks about we're not going to talk about the priests of the outer court, we're not going to talk about the priests of the holy place, but we are going to talk about one priest because we want to talk about one man. And so it says, "Every high priest..." It takes every other priest off the board. "Every high priest is taken..." through dedication, consecration, separation, and he is ordained by that "being taken." He is separated unto God. The separation unto is much more important than the separation from because if you are being separated unto, if we really see him, we would be more than a disciple that flees the cross. We are separated unto him in order that we would have that that is of him for man. That is the definition of a high priest. One verse: "... ordained for man in things pertaining to God." You have to be taken from man in order to have something to offer to man; otherwise, you are just playing hot-potato with philosophies and religious platitudes.

Hebrews 7:26 – 27, "For such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and gave himself for every sinner, and made higher than the heavens, who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's, for he did this once when

he offered up himself.” In the ninth chapter, the eleventh verse, “But Christ being come...” so, he did the “being come” and that was now in the rear-view mirror. This is talking about “being come,” not “becoming” – when “he was made a high priest of good things to come.” Was that for him? Well, it wasn’t a bad deal for him. “...by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this earth, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered.” Nobody goes in without blood, but the quality of the blood determines what you get into. Until the quality of the life has been improved by being made by something more than what you were by birth, you have a limited effectualness.

I’ve got to say this, at this point, and I’m sorry if anybody gets upset with me for it, but as long as you are offering another on your behalf, as long as what you are bringing is a substitutionary sacrifice, it has a limited productivity in your life. If you did anything but the big two sins, even under the law, you sacrificed; it died; you went back forgiven. But the blood of Christ, being much more effectual, not only forgives the sin but gives you a righteousness before God, but it cannot make you offer yourself. You still have to be made that priest that offers its own life. We join him in our second birth to his first birth, but in his first birth, he still had to be saved. What do you want to define sin as? Violation of the law? That qualifies. How about all that is not of faith? That also qualifies. How about facing the call of God that’s on your life and falling short of the glory? He had to be saved. If he had fallen short, he could not have been a propitiation; he could not have been an atoning offering for us. But he did it so that we could follow him. He did it so that “where I am there ye can be also. Where I am going you can’t follow me now, but you will.” Why? Because the purpose of God and his sovereign plan was in himself until he expressed it.

The going forwardness of that coming to a harvest is by man. He will not act unilaterally. He cannot bring his purpose to completion by himself. “Well,” you say, “he can do anything he wants to do.” What he wants to do is to fulfill his purpose. That is what he wants to do. He said it; he has written it; he has limited himself to it. “Therefore will the Lord wait that he might be gracious,” that he might be powerful on behalf of those who approach him on a covenant ground, those who trust in the provision of the sacrifice that he made on their behalf that their sins are forgiven and that they have a right standing before God without their own effort. I know, I know, it’s outrageous, but that is just the beginning of the sacrifice.

What we are looking at now is a gospel that is so much more about the going forwardness, the leaving behind “that which was gain to me.” Has his sacrifice

been gain to me? Oh, my Lord, yes. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which God has laid in Jesus Christ.” You cannot start without it, but the truth of the matter is that you must build on that foundation, and we are counseled to build wisely. The story that Paul gives about this building, the principles are intact, but the examples are way simple. Who would be the least in our midst; who is going to volunteer for that one? But if you had a court case that you had to solve, don’t take it to the judiciary of the local government; set the least in your midst. How many people are applying for that position? Now who among the least of us, if you had a pile of materials, two piles – separated – and over here there is a pile of wood, hay and stubble, and over there you have a pile of gold, silver and precious stones. If you say, “OK, we are going to build.” Which pile do you want to build from? Ummm, hmmm. Something that endures fire; that would be a good idea. What about hay, wood and stubble? Oh, my goodness. We would all choose the obvious. But, it’s not that obvious; is it? Because, you see, in “being made,” it is something that is done to us, and the implication of needing it to be done to us is it’s something we cannot generate out of our own wisdom and our own capacity.

I’m not sure that I can count how many times I’ve had to repent to the foundation. If the foundation is based on the forgiveness of sins and the establishment of righteousness without works, what can you do to harm the foundation? “Well, I could sin.” No, they’re forgiven. “Oh, yeah. Um, hmmm, this is harder than I thought.” Yeah, it’s really a stretch. “We probably ought to consider this and reconvene in five years and talk about it.” The foundation stands sure, and then you build on it, and you build wisely. Guess what? The wisdom that is required is important to build wisely because there is a test coming, and the test is going to prove what you built with. According to the metaphor or the picture that Paul gave of building on the foundation, the test is a fire. It becomes more important what pile you build out of now. But the thing that is such an assurance to me, the thing that makes me realize that this salvation is being fit to me on a personal, individual basis by the Spirit of God is the fact that if the fire comes through and I built with wood, hay and stubble and I lose the work that I have done, the foundation stands on the building site – clean. That fire is so violent, you don’t even have to sweep off the dust or the ashes or unburned pieces of wood; it just leaves the foundation the way it was laid – by God, complete, immovable, obdurate, substantial, eternal. The next part of it is so comforting. It really has given me a confidence toward God to keep walking in spite of my record because it says that the fire that destroys the work that isn’t made out of the right stuff, saves the man. The implication of “saved” is not just that it doesn’t just destroy; the implication of salvation is that it makes him better. You are better for the destruction of the work

that you build wrong. Why? Because you are one step closer to finding out what to build with. We can all serve in some way – you know, the cameos of our life – as an example of how not to do it. Like somebody said, “Don’t ever give up; you can always serve as a bad example.” At least you’re a servant.

He entered offering his own life to God. The Bible is not, primarily, serving as a historic document. It isn’t really about history; it’s about his story. (There are some amazingly accurate details in it. They have found cities that they didn’t even think existed and they were exactly where the scriptures say they were and had exactly the name that the scriptures said they had.) It’s the unfolding of his story. The second story out of the garden (the first story being in the garden), you get two boys bringing an offering. So, offerings were instituted 2500 years before the priesthood was. There weren’t priests until Moses. The word is not even in the book. (Well, there was Melchizedek, but that is a funny story all unto itself. And there are things that are so difficult to accurately articulate that the author of the book said, Although I’d like to.... You might understand the dictionary definition of the words, but you wouldn’t understand what I am describing.) There were 2500 years of offering without a priest. One of the things that was involved in the transition of going from no priest with offering to priests offering was that God spoke to Israel and said, “When you come into the land, you will no longer offer in every cultic place as you do now. But you will bring your offering to the place where I put my name.” And then he said that it had to be done a certain way and offered by a certain man. All a prophecy, all a testimony of the going forwardness of God unfolding his purpose in Christ.

Hebrews 12, I want to start with the last verse and work backwards. It says, “For our God is a consuming fire.” The word “for” is kind of like “therefore,” or “wherefore.” It encourages you that if you didn’t get the point that “for” was introducing, read up. The twenty-sixth verse, “Whose voice then shook the earth but now hath he promised saying, ‘yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.’ And this word, once more, signifying the removing of those things that are shaken as those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken are all that’s left. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

A friend of mine, who I hadn’t seen in at least six months – this is going back, maybe six, seven years ago – he saw me and said, “How you doing?” A normal greeting. And I said, “Well, do you want the short version, the long version, or do you want the real version?” And he said, “Well, let’s start with the real version and

go from there.” I said, “I’m very concerned about myself.” He said, “OK.” He didn’t jump on it; he was really nice. He didn’t say, “Well, I’ve been concerned for you for years.” He said, “Well, why’s that?” “Because,” I said, “I read in the fifth chapter of Hebrews where he, who was without sin, ‘with loud crying and tears, prayers and supplication and godly fear unto him who was able to save him from death’, and I’m not seeing that here, in me, yet. It bothers me.” We can go out and fake it till we make it, but God sees through that. We can mount a campaign and make a list, put it on our mirror, brush our teeth, go out and yell in the woods for a while. That is not what it’s talking about. It’s talking about encountering enough of the work of the Spirit that we’re being made and we’re coming to the measure of a stature that is beginning to be an expression of the life of Christ, more than the life of “John,” and that the characteristic of that life has within it its own way. It’s the fulfillment of what it talks about in 1 Corinthians 15, when it says, As you have borne an appearance of being earthy in all its scope and all its variations and varieties, so also shall you bear an expression of the life that is heavenly, of God, that comes from above. It is harvested by presenting ourselves to the influence of His Spirit. The “as” part was by birth through growth.

I was at Hilltop and stayed with the Marley and Monique and asked, “Did you have any idea when Sam was three years old that John Haas would one day say, ‘As notable as I am in the field of my profession, I think this kid just passed me?’” They said, “We had no idea.” But he grew into it. He became it. Who knew? The Apostle John said, “Beloved, now, today, right now, standing on the foundation that God has laid, we are the sons of God, but don’t trade on that unless you are going forward because it doesn’t yet appear, and this is all about manifestation. This is by revelation, but it’s not all about revelation. It’s about harvesting the work of the Spirit consistent with the revealed word of God to become the fulfillment of a manifestation of a different life.

“Yet once more....” If we read up further, you would see that “the once” that it is talking about that shook the earth, it says that we have not come to a mountain that might not be touched, that shook and trembled and had fire and obscurity and the voice came and everybody trembled and said, “We don’t want to go near that.” What was that mountain representing? What happened when a mediator trudged up that mountain and came down? What came down with him that did not go up with him? The law. The law shook the earth. Obviously, not hard enough, but it did shake the earth, and it says, “What the law could not do...” God knew it wasn’t going to accomplish everything that he wanted to have it accomplish, but it was still a step. The “yet once more” is not talking about “yet once more” shaking the

heavens. He didn't say he shook the heavens the first time; he shook the earth. But this time when he shakes the earth, it is not going to be by coming out of the earth with a law that governs the natural process; it's going to be an unnatural testimony that comes from the heavens and it is going to shake the earth. That testimony that God is going to bring that is going to shake the heavens is a fully manifested, revealed son in a corporate body – one that was born in sin and shaped in iniquity and established on a foundation of a substitutionary sacrifice and then offered themselves. That's where we stand because in as much as it says, in reading up in verse 18, "we have not come to a mountain that might be touched," we have come to a mountain that we cannot see and it does not shake against us. Jesus said to Nicodemus, If you are not born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.

This is the mountain that we have come to. This is the mountain we look at – the mountain that can't be seen unless you are born again and moved by the Spirit of God forward to fulfill his purpose in you by offering yourself to the ongoing work of the Spirit. Then he said, not only can't you see it, but if you can't see it, you are not going to enter in to it. Seeing the kingdom is that which has been revealed to us. That is a great and necessary step, but the revelation isn't going to change us. The revelation won't change us. It can reveal to us the need for change; it can show us what we really are and what he has called us to. Revelation is a necessary ingredient, but we have to enter into the kingdom of God that we see, and that means being subject to the laws of a different government than what governs this earth, not being subject only to natural law: touch not; taste not – funded by will worship. Colossians 2 says it. This is entering into a kingdom that cannot be seen unless you are standing on the foundation and have confidence that your sins, not only past but present and future, are atoned. Why? So, we can sin more? Most people I know don't have time to sin more. If we define sin as "falling short of the glory of God," we all stand in need. Any man who says he has not sin is deceived. The provision of the covenant includes a provision for sin, not just the performance that would leave you condemned for what you did in your baby-dom but that would begin to reach down into your guts and yank at what you are.

God imbedded in this man as Saul, a testimony that would be the basis on which the gospel of grace that God gave him would be founded. It was a failure that was so abject and so complete that, although he no longer had any remorse or sense of personal responsibility and although he had no condemnation in his life because that had been eradicated through Christ, he still stood and looked them in the eye and said, I am not worthy to be called an apostle because, under my own head of

steam and my own understanding and my own wisdom, the best conclusion that I could come to and acting on God's behalf was to persecute the church. God ripped his guts out of him. Broken. So that he said, I am what I am by grace. In spite of saying grace is not founded on works (He spent a lot of time saying it in one chapter; he referred to it constantly.), he also said, "But I labored more abundantly..." Yes, this is going to take work. Do you know what the work essentially is? To stay in trust. The implication of it having to be imputed to us without works does not just mean that you didn't have it in your bank account when the bank note came due. It was that you couldn't mortgage anything to make a loan to get it, either. It's not only that you didn't have it and couldn't get it, but you had no hope of ever having it. So, when we were without hope and without God in this world, Christ died.

I've got to say that where we are in this going forwardness of the work of the Holy Spirit is going to cause you to have to partake of something that is more than just a substitutionary sacrifice. What can shake you? What are the impediments that shake you? What rocks you back on your heels? We have the story of Job and we know that when you obtain imputed righteousness that God draws attention to you because he isn't just satisfied with imputed righteousness. There is a parable that Jesus taught, and I'm going to short cut to the bottom line of that parable. A rich man went into a far country and he gave talents to three servants. The one that he wasn't happy with was the one that only gave him back what he had been given when his master left. If I think that I am going to settle accounts at the white throne of God's judgment by offering an imputed righteousness, that parable should disabuse me of that concept. We have to invest.

In that paradigm and in that story and the metaphor that that parable represents, he had to put something at risk in order to invest. This program does not involve risk; this is guaranteed. So, where's the hesitation? One of my offerings about six weeks ago was, "Lord, please forgive me for my hesitant approach. Please forgive me for my reluctance. Please forgive me for trying to understand before I do. Please forgive me for not running to you, but thank you, Lord, for your mercy." There is my need for change. It isn't that I'm putting what I invest at risk. I am putting it in a place where moth cannot corrupt and rust does not decay. I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I give to him against the day of Jesus Christ. There's no risk. What is the problem? What is the hesitancy? The hesitancy is fear. It is not risk. Do you know that God is the will to the good of all at all times that aren't him, and he does so at his expense? He has no option of

doing anything other than that. He is the will to the good of all at all times that aren't him at his expense, and he has proven it.

We stand on a foundation that cannot be shaken. My problem isn't risk; my problem is fear. I might hide my fear under pride and I might try to solve my fear by knowledge, but if any man will do the works of my Father, he must believe – trust. It isn't what my doctrinal stand is. It isn't according to my understanding. It's according to our trust so that we would commit ourselves unto God as unto a faithful Creator. Create in me! How is he going to do that? I don't know. When is he going to do it? I don't know. That's where trust comes. The guarantee of this, it says, is that except a man hate his life in this world, he cannot be my disciple. Except a man lose his life in this world for my sake and for the gospel's and if a man seeks to save his life, he'll lose it. He taught it; he taught it; he taught it. He lived it. Just think about what was Jesus' commandment. I would say (because I did), "Well, he commanded us to love one another. This commandment I give unto you." But I didn't say, "What was his commandment to us?" What was his commandment from God? "I lay my life down..." What does that look like? The life that is Christ that was quickened in us is not self-sourced. "I live by the Father." John 8:28 and 29, just phrases, cherry-picking out of those verses. He said, I do nothing of myself, but I do always those things that please my Father. Do you know how you please God? You don't bring him the best of what you have, Cain; he is going to turn it down. Just warning you ahead of time. You offer yourself to his workmanship.

Hebrews 13:20 – 21, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will" – and here is the kicker – "working in you that which is well-pleasing to him." It's almost like he is going to work in you both to will and to do his good pleasure. So, what does it take? What is my co-laborship? Presenting in confidence that what is needed today he will accomplish in me by the Spirit, whether I know it or not.

I have a little story to tell you about that – people like examples. I was never aware before in my life that I ever hated anybody. In 2004 (This is not ancient history, either.), I became aware that I hated somebody. I'm not saying I never had; I'm saying it just wasn't right there. It was ugly. I didn't want to kill him, but I recognized I was guilty. I didn't want to rain down fire on him; I just held him accountable in a way that was not just less than loving; it was actually a vicious hatred. I couldn't shake it. I don't know what you would do, but what I did was I prayed, I spoke in tongues, I begged God for mercy and forgiveness. You know,

sometimes we would run over to Job and want to lay hands on him to pray for him to get him healed. God would say, Yeah, yeah. I got this. I'm trying to get him out of a righteousness that's based in himself to a righteousness that is based in me. You all don't know me, but I get excessive and extreme at times. I called one of my best friends; he happens to be a prophet. Actually, it was funnier than that; he called me. I had done everything I knew to do. I actually even fasted. I mean a water fast. I woke up the next morning and said, "Surely, this thing will be gone." David said, "My sin is ever before me." This thing was obnoxious, really. You know when you feel like just – yuck – and you can't do anything about it. I was locked up. I prayed the prayer, by the way; I said, "Oh, Lord, I forgive Brother No, really I mean it." So I said to my friend, "What are you doing?" He said, "Today I'm going out to work on a condo." It was a mile from where I was renting an apartment. I said, "OK, what time are you going to get there?" He said, "Eight-thirty." I said, "See you there." He said, "OK." Friends don't have to ask what do you want, why are you doing this; it's just OK, I'll see you. So, I got there. He was unloading his van and taking tools into the condo he was going to work on. He came up, saw me. I walked over to him. In the middle of the parking lot, I got on both knees and I said, "Pray for me. Lay your hands on me and pray for me. I can't get this done." I told him what the problem was. It didn't matter to me. It wasn't embarrassing; it was just something I needed shed of. I was desperate. It wasn't loud crying and tears yet, but.... Two weeks passed. Nope, it didn't work. I woke up one morning; I didn't know what was different. I hadn't done anything the night before; I hadn't waged war with the demons or anything. I just went to sleep. I woke up the next morning, and it took me a while to realize – it was gone. I don't know what he did; I don't know when he did it; I don't know how he did it. He did it and it taught me a lesson that not only now are we the sons of God and, even though it doesn't appear what we are, it doesn't matter if it doesn't feel like we are, either. This is trust. Quit trying to download into earth's reference point the salvation of God which is by the Spirit. Will it have an effect? In time, yes, it will.

God said to Abraham, I want you to pack your stuff up; we're going on a trip. Abraham said, Where we going? (I know, it's not written there but human nature, come on...) And God said, I'm not going to tell you. I'll give you instructions a day at a time. Of course, what Abraham didn't hear was God's intent in doing it this way, but God was saying, I want this journey to be long enough that you need a daily connection with me every day to get your instructions as to where to go so that in the process of the daily encounter, something of you getting to know me will take place that goes beyond geography. So, was it ten days into the journey when God said to him, Now take your son, your only son, Isaac, to a mountain that I will

show you? No, it was at the end of the journey, plus twenty-five years, plus another fourteen years, plus separating himself from the law, putting his son that he loved out of the house. In time, his relationship and his trust in God grew to the point where it was now appropriate for what God had wanted to do when he first called him, which was test him to the shedding of his own blood. So God said, “Take your son....” Early the next morning – no fasting and prayer, no “Oh, God, should we get some words on this? Which mountain did you say it was?” – and he said to his servants, We’re both coming back; and in his heart, he was fully invested, with no accountability of risk to pull a knife across his son’s throat and watch him bleed out.

The going forwardness of the gospel – the trial of our faith/trust. Whatever hides under the covering of fear has to be exposed, and if the fire needs to come, clean off the foundation and start again, it’s ok. Most of the stories, in fact it says all of the stories that we do have insight into in the scripture are brokered on failure anyhow. Nobody is really worth anything until they are broken for the kingdom of God. You’ll come in and rule and not serve if you’re not broken. You’ll “white knight” the thing by gifting. This isn’t about leading the sheep; the sheep have a good shepherd. This is about being discipled on a personal, individual, custom-suited application of the going forwardness of the work of the Holy Spirit that I be changed. I can let up off the gas pedal of trust as soon as I get a glorified body because that is what the eradication of sin looks like.

David said, coming out of Nathan’s accusation or the conviction of the Spirit through Nathan and the testimony that he had of his acknowledgement was, two things: “I should die.” (Nathan said, God told me you’re not going to.) Then, he went straight into intercession, against the will of God for the life of the infant, and part of his prayer was, “O God, against thee, and thee only, have I sinned.”

Hebrews 13:12. Again, referencing and collecting some of the things that we’ve talked about and piling it into one verse, “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the camp.” Here is the sum of this message to me: We have an altar to eat from – that we must partake of this altar – and this altar is a distinctively different altar. The altars, typically, that we are familiar with from the scripture are altars whereby the priests who had no land and couldn’t plant crops and raise animals and sustain their own life by their work, when an offering was brought and they did their service of accomplishing the offering itself, they were allowed to partake of the offering. They ate, or were sustained, by the work they did from the altars that they served at. This is not that altar. This is not the altar that we are called to partake of, an altar whereby

our life is sustained. This is an altar that we are to partake of where we lay our life down and trust against fear.

What is the fear of presenting yourself to God? Want to make a list? You can't see him; you can't define him; you can't control him; you don't know when it's going to happen or what it's going to look like or how it will show up. The antithesis to man's confidence is fear, and the solution to that fear is knowledge, definability and control. When you look at fear, don't genuflect to knowledge. Genuflect to trust. The solution for fear is trust, and he is not asking us to trust him beyond what he has proven himself to be. Just trust him today. Offer yourself today. That's how the life of Christ comes to maturity. Scripture is plain in its testimony that it is possible to be in Christ, born again, baptized in the Holy Spirit, blood bought, have cast out devils and done many mighty works, and still be a baby because you are unskillful in how to relate to God properly. That's what it says, "unskillful in the word of righteousness." It does not mean you don't know how to spell the word; it means you have not come under the government of the relationship. How do we know this? Because it says, "When enough time has passed that you should be..., you're not." So, it's important what we do today – present yourself.

Concerning natural life, as a type and shadow used all the way through scripture (It's not the reality itself; it's just the type and shadow.), if we put a three month old infant on a table or on a bench here, and we have a ton of people, so we are each going to take thirty minutes and watch the baby. The first one who sees it grow, call us. Why do you laugh? Because you are never going to see it grow. We are not going to invest today and see a difference tomorrow. This isn't based on sight; this isn't based on feelings. This is based on trust. The word patience has almost nothing to do with time. The meaning of the word patience is "to stay under." If you are staying under and that's where you are going to stay until he lifts you up, then time is irrelevant. He didn't say, "Stay under for a day; stay under for ten years." Stay under. Well, when do I get up? When he lifts you up. Peter had that much. He said, "Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will lift you up" when he's done.

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