

Faithful Creator

What we have come to in God at this time is not a light matter. It is not an insignificant thing. There is a sense in which the significance of the place in which we stand is greater than any of the observable miracles that have taken place at any time in history, even those as described by the Bible. Certainly, a demonstration of power by the Spirit of God during the time of Moses in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt – destroying the most powerful army on the planet at that time without them lifting a finger – was an enormous demonstration of the power and the purpose and the capacity of God. We could think back even to maybe the greatest of all the miracles that have been seen, which would be the very creation of this world itself. The story of it and the report of it is in Hebrews 11. That which we see, God made without starting with something that had already appeared. It was a verbal creativity that was an exhibition of his capacity. It brought forth a natural creation that has sustained the infection of human experience in spite of its determination to extinguish itself because of its inhospitality and its lack of love for one another.

There's a groaning that is beginning to become so palpable and so tangible that it's difficult to ignore. There's a desire that is beginning to be expressed in the sons of God to see this creation delivered from its inability, to be delivered from the ability that it has that is taking it in a described path towards destruction. There is scripture that says, If the days weren't shortened, there would no flesh exist; all flesh would perish. Another scripture talks about the righteous being scarcely saved.

I want to start in I Peter 4:17-19, For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. There's a pattern scripture in Hebrews 13:20-21 that is pertinent to that and it says, 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, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

I am overwhelmed. I'm beyond measure. I'm beyond capacity. Every day, I fight a battle for faith to believe for what I don't yet see. The testimony many times of what I see, and not just that which is around me that I look at, but that which I see that comes up from within me is a significant trial of my faith to trust that what God has promised is still his intent to fulfill, and not just in a universal sense of the word but in my life. I think this is true for each member of the body of Christ that in order to stay engaged, we have to become rooted in something that's beyond our experience. We have to have experience; we can't just have doctrine. We understand that we can't just quote Bible verses. We have to have an encounter and experience with our God. We also have to have a faith that reaches into what isn't yet, and to a large extent, that which has never been seen.

Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration wasn't changed on the mount. It's just that the three disciples who were with him had the opportunity of seeing him as he always had been since coming up out of the wilderness. There was a reality concerning him that was not of this world. Although it was shrouded, it was the reason that he was able to walk on water, multiply loaves and fishes, heal the blind, and raise the dead. It wasn't seen but it worked because it was the reality of what was working in him and the testimony to him having been for 30 years under the discipline and the working of his father's hand.

We have scripture and we have testimony, and I think we have a witness in the spirit that even exceeds the definition of the verse where it says that we are his workmanship. We are created in Christ Jesus unto the purpose for which God has ordained. His creativity and this confidence that we have toward God, the one who brought our Lord Jesus from the dead and the one who brought, not just back to the life that he had before he died – that was a Lazarus resurrection – this is a Jesus resurrection. This is a testimony to the first resurrection: the most critical, impactful resurrection. There were those who were raised from the dead: the widows' son was raised from the dead; a man was raised from a tomb on the battlefield when he fell into a hole and touched Elisha's bones; but they were just raised to the life they had before they died. This first resurrection is being raised into a life that up until that time had never been experienced by the one who died. Life evermore. Life that is no more dominated. Life that is no more dependent. Life that is the source.

This world needs a source. We know that the source this world needs is our God, but God has, for his reasons, committed himself to bring deliverance by

man. Certainly, what Jesus came and did was pivotal as a testimony to the purpose and the capacity of God to fulfill what his intent is. We have this hope because of that testimony. Hope is in what I don't have. If I had it, I would not be hoping. I think there's something that's beginning to be a reflected influence in the body of Christ, in the context of the body to which I'm exposed. I'm hearing that testimony coming from such a variety of resources, that I'm saying, God, this has to be you and the support of the Holy Spirit to bring to substance that which has not been seen before.

The testimony of Peter saying, Listen, if we're going to do this thing, we're going to give ourselves to the spirit of God as a faithful creator. He is going to bring forth in me a life that has not existed and is not dependent upon what already is in existence in order to testify that it is actually against my experience up until this time. Are we supported by his handiwork? Yes. We cannot be well-pleasing in his sight unless it is him who does it. This is testimony to what Paul testified saying, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man that which God has for them who love him.

There are a lot of spirits that float around, and we hear them. If you don't hear the testimony spiritually, you can hear the testimony by what other people say at times. There are those who want to pacify the urgency and say, Look, God's going to do it; we just need to relax. He will fulfill his word. That's not untrue, but I see Jesus and the testimony of his pursuit of his purpose unto the suffering of death. I hear him saying to his disciples, How am I straitened until this be accomplished? How am I focused; how is my field of vision narrowed to one thing? I hear Paul testify, I have come to a place in my life in my pursuit of the things of God and there is one thing left that I do. I feel the spirit of God is echoing through time, and the reverberation is in harmony with his intent from the very beginning that he have a testimony in the earth to his capacity, not just to bring forth the natural creation, but to bring the testimony of a spiritual creation.

Certainly, this is what happened when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. There was a life that was birthed that was unlike Adam. It wasn't a natural life; it was a spiritual life in a natural body. Did that life have to come to maturity? Yes. Did it know from the day that it hit the manger what it was about? No, it did not. It had to learn, it had to grow, it had to be subject to. The testimony of Hebrews 5:7 is that it had to be saved. It did not have within itself the resources to be successful. I am so glad that testimony is there because I have looked high and low within myself, and I am overwhelmed.

I have been called with a calling that I cannot possibly accomplish. I have been called to a destination that I do not understand. Thankfully, I'm resourced by certain passages of scripture that give evidence to this as being part of what God's purpose is for some. I'm thankful for the 6th chapter of Hebrews, where it says leaving what can be taught. Being established in what you have been taught, being grounded, being confirmed, being stabilized by what you've been taught is for the purpose of having solid ground to step forward into that which can no longer be taught, that can no longer be defined by doctrine. That is a relinquishing of ourselves to the hand of God. That is the fulfillment of what God spoke to Peter when he said, Peter, in your youth there were things that I sought to teach you that you could understand where we were going with this. You had to energize yourself and motivate yourself to do what it was that was in front of you, but in coming to full purpose as a son, there has to be a shift that takes place. You are no longer going to clothe yourself. You are no longer going to do anything but stand there with your arms stretched forth until another does clothe you. You're no longer going to go in a way that you understand, and you're not going to stand there and ask your father to show you so that you do understand. You're going to have to trust what you don't know, and you're going to be carried.

We start some of our responsibilities in the spirit of God as we grow up and we recognize that they that are led of the spirit of God are the sons of God. I was in a grocery store yesterday, looking at a head of cauliflower, and I thought I should buy it but decided not to buy it. I came home to dinner, and we didn't have a vegetable. I'm sorry; it's a very small thing. It's seemingly insignificant, but it's a testimony to me that although I'm hearing I can't quite discern whether it's my thought or the spirit of God, yet. It's still an indication to me of the need I have to subject myself to the ongoing work of my father in my life to grow me up, that I would be subject to him in all things, even cauliflower. These things can be insignificant and these things can be things that really don't matter. Nobody died of starvation because we didn't have cauliflower. However, I see a need in myself to be so sensitized, to be made so conformable that I'm able to be carried, not just led. Was I being led of the spirit? Was it an event just to show me my inadequacy and my need? It certainly was that. This has to go past being led of the spirit because I am being shaped. There are sons who are being shaped as they come to God's purpose for his reason in his season. I'm being shaped into something that is a creative work that exceeds the capacity of God demonstrated by bringing forth this natural world.

In I Corinthians 15, Paul spent some time in the chapter saying that there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. That which is first is that which is natural, and that which is afterward is that which is spiritual. He gives us a key as to how this progression takes place in our lives because it says that if a seed is not sown, it abides alone; but if it's sown, God gives it a body as it pleases him and that which is reaped is not that which was sown. Thank God we are having unveiled to us some of the mysteries by which the kingdom of God actually operates in a greater efficiency so that the grace of God is not just tolerated – and is certainly not in any way diminished – but that the grace of God can flourish because we've been made compliant to its purpose by getting out of the way and letting go of our purpose and our understanding and our thoughts.

Certainly, we have seen God strip us as a people of structure. We heard 50 years ago, the clarion call come and the feast of trumpets seeking to bring us through pentecost into the feast of atonement saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you be partakers of the coming judgment. Coming out of the structured. This was not just the structure because there was a building with a white pointy thing on top of it, and not just the structure because the choir had robes or the service had an ordinance of what song was going to be sung and it was charted in some cases almost a year before the bulletin was published, and not just that we were brought out of the predictability of that. Instead, we were brought out into the light of a relationship with God where we had to take a personal responsibility and accountability before our father.

The challenge to transit, to shift, to follow God from being natural to being spiritual is a trial of faith. That is a tribulation that is the greatest tribulation that man can go through; the outcome of which is the rarest testimony that will ever or has ever been made in human experience. In the midst of being surrounded by a creation that is natural and has continuity because it is generation after generation and every seed brings forth after its kind, there is going to be a testimony that there is a final generation and there is a seed that did not bring forth after its kind. There are those who were willing to sow themselves as being natural and allow the power of God to change them to being what isn't natural.

This world is in desperate condition and doesn't know it. I am in desperate condition and I'm becoming more aware of it than I've ever been before. In Titus 3:3-4, For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy,

hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. This is beginning to describe something that I think is the most important thing that we face as a body of Christ. We need to be established in it in order to have the freedom to go forward. It continues in verse 5, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

This refers back to the 4th chapter of Romans where Paul, referencing David's description of Abraham's experience, talked about the blessedness of God toward man. There is a purpose that God has toward Adam and that purpose is in Christ. That purpose is a blessing and there is no blessing for man apart from Christ. Jesus testified to this with Nicodemus when he said, You must be born again, and having been born again, then follow on in the regeneration and experience the full dimension of God's purpose: that we would grow up into him who is the head in all things and come to maturity and inherit the promise of God.

The promise of God has been stated in many ways to many men. One of the first statements to that promise was when he said to Abraham, I am your exceedingly great reward. But all those promises aren't true because they were promised; they are true promises because they are anchored in the intent of God before the world was. God made a provision for every aspect of what man needed because there was a lamb that was slain. We know that there were no physical lambs; they weren't formed until the 5th day of creation. It wasn't that there was something that happened physically, but it is a picture of the commitment of God to fund fully the provision to redeem mankind that desperately needed to be redeemed. I have a desperate need for full redemption.

Isaiah characterized Jesus as a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. It wasn't because of the last 36 hours of his life that he was characterized as a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. It wasn't because of the last 36 hours of his life that we see the picture in Hebrews 5, that he in the days of his flesh with loud crying and tears, supplications and prayers, unto him who was able to save him and was heard because he had desperation toward him who could save him. We don't see that; we don't get that story. We see him at 12; we see him at 30; we see him at the marriage feast; we see him healing the lepers. We get no picture of the affliction of his soul. If we were to make a list of what we do see from his life to fill in the blank in which Paul said, O, that I might know him and the fellowship of his sufferings, what list would we make that would be our fellowship with his sufferings? How long would

that list be? What would characterize that list? We don't see that part of his life. As far as I can tell, the only cloudy day he ever had was when he was betrayed by Judas, taken and whipped, scourged, crowned with thorns, his beard pulled, spit upon, and then crucified. That's not a fun window of time; I get that.

Scripture is also clear that he died so that there could be a testimony in some in time that they don't have to die. It's evident that there are some who aren't going to testify to his being crucified by being crucified or die because he died. There are those who are never going to die because he died, so that can't be the fellowship of his sufferings. Isaiah said, He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

There is a judgment that is seeking to begin in our house. It is not a judgment that we have to receive. It is a judgment that we can ignore; we can look away. Most people in this world and most people in the church in this world have no idea of that judgment. But some must. This is an expression of the mercy of God. This is an expression of being so rooted in a righteousness that's imputed that your testimony of 10 seconds ago cannot bring you to condemnation. We know that we have an accuser and we know that he accuses day and night. There are times when we may be under some kind of cloud and we say, I don't deserve this; I didn't do anything wrong. The accusations aren't always true, but most of the accusations that he brings to me are rooted in fact. If I'm not rooted in a righteousness that's imputed to me without works, I'm going to condemn myself.

Paul says there's a place where the wretched condition of the body of this sin can be overthrown and testified against. That place is if we live in the spirit the life that is Christ; if we live by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; if we live in the provision of God to impute righteousness where unrighteousness has lodged; if we live in the blessedness of the provision of God in Christ that says, I am not going to impute your sin to you; if we live in the blessedness of the woman taken in adultery who was told, I am not here to condemn you; please, go and sin no more.

It's unreasonable to think that the world won't hold accountability for sin. It's unreasonable to think that the church is going to evidence mercy. This is a new path. This is a new place. This is a different life. Jesus stood in front of Lazarus' tomb and said, The day is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God and live. If any man believes in me, the same shall never ever die.

It is a challenge for me, knowing my history – and if there's any history that I'm short on, I have an enemy of my soul that is faithful to testify – to maintain a sense of worthiness for the ongoing work of God. A worthiness that isn't rooted in my ability, but a worthiness that is rooted in my dependency, so that God, who gives life to the dead, and God, who is seeking to bring forth a creation and a manifestation of that which has never been seen, can have free reign in my life by grace and mercy. We don't see this travail in many places; it's a hidden thing. We want to dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadows of the Almighty. Do you know the place that describes? It isn't primarily a place of safety; it's a place of mercy. It's a place that's established in imputed righteousness without works. It's a place of experiencing a life that cleanses the conscience. It doesn't just forgive the sin. It does forgive the sin, but it cleanses the conscience.

This isn't just the fulfillment of what Isaiah said, Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. It's not just the fulfillment of seeing that sin is red. That's a tough one for the body of Christ. It's been a tough one for me. Sometimes, I have to be reminded, It's red, John. It's red. It's not black. It's red. But, until we can get that so embedded in us through the operation of the spirit of God to bring forward in us by his work that which is well pleasing in his sight, we will not have the foundations to step forward into the fact that it's not black, it's not red; it's white.

The thing I want to leave you with is a testimony out of Romans 8. I suppose this is a little evangelistic, but it's ok. In our quietness before the Lord, let's ask the Lord to shine the light of a glorious gospel that's rooted in mercy and let's take an honest evaluation of a very familiar portion of scripture. I'm not leaving it out of context because everybody already knows the context. Romans 8:23, And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the evidence of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. The evidence that the law of the spirit of life in Christ has been working to set us free from the law of sin and death is the redemption of the body. The culminating work of being delivered from the law of sin and death is the redemption of the body. So, just to clarify this, the redemption of the body speaks about receiving a glorified body that's no longer limited by time and distance. It's no longer dependent upon anything natural for sustenance. It's beyond what we saw in Jesus when he was here, prior to dying on the cross. It's the body that he had afterwards

that nobody saw or understood. It's without limitation; it's without dependency.

Do I have a positive anticipation toward God that I will receive that because my soul has been made ready? I still see testimony of the unreadiness of my soul. I still see people whom I offend just by being me, not because I'm trying to offend, just because I'm not a full expression of the intent – that he set his love and his intent upon me. There's nothing within us that deserves it. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We can all say with Paul, In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. What might look good may be the most evil because it lies. God is reaching out. He's seeking those who will come to worship him by prostrating themselves before what's necessary today. If I'm in kindergarten, spiritually speaking, I want to have a good day in kindergarten. I don't want to pretend I'm in 9th grade to impress somebody. I want to deal with things on a very practical basis as they come up. The way that I deal with things isn't seeing God overcome them. The way I deal with things is it fuels the dependency with which I come to him to do what only he can do. There are some things that are going to stay. Paul asked three times for the removal of something that was a hindrance to him. God said, I am leaving it. I have to have something working in your life beyond this revelation that I've given you.

Somebody wrote about 35-40 years ago concerning Paul and said that Paul didn't get a lot done during his lifetime. If you look at the outworking of his life when he died, all Asia had left him, only Demas had stayed; he was dying in prison; he was lonely; he was without comfort. There had been a company of people who assigned themselves the responsibility of following around everywhere he went and teaching diametrically opposed to what he was seeking to establish. But thanks be to God, this author said, I wonder if Paul sees the benefit of what he wrote and how nourishing it's been to generations after generations, after millennium of the church. Then, he went on saying, I think there is going to be that which Paul wrote that we will never plummet the depths of. I disagree with that, but I understand why he said it. Yet, to this man Paul, God said, I'm going to keep something working in you that is in the flesh, and it's there to keep you grounded because if you aren't grounded in me, if you don't stay dependent upon me, you're going to get carried away into some religious twitch that doesn't have any reality to it.

The fellowship of his sufferings is to look, to some extent, at ourselves. I'm not saying it's a comprehensive evaluation that's all inclusive, but I'm saying that I do know that the fellowship of his sufferings includes looking at our

inability and not letting it defeat our hope. The reason for that is that we are established on the foundation of the benefit of another man's sacrifice; it always functions. Christ is the end of the law, and if Christ is the end of law, it's the end of guilty; it's the end of condemnation.

Let's go back and finish the verse from Romans 10:4, Christ is the end of the law to all who trust. Righteousness is the path of the just learning to live by faith. Righteousness is that which establishes the work of God in an unrestricted way in our life: that grace no longer be limited or frustrated or hindered or failed. My righteousness is rooted in that which is imputed to me without works, not my works. It's imputed to me based on his working.

We have an opportunity in front of us that, although it's been available since before the world started, has never been as clearly declared as it is being now. My personal belief is that there have never been as many saints alive on the earth at any time as there are now who have this call at this time to come to maturity. Because it's done by grace, there is nothing that disqualifies anyone. Because it's rooted in mercy, there's nothing that qualifies anybody as being special. Now, unto him who is able to keep that which I commit. That is my confidence.

*John Cheever
October 23, 2022
Tucson Zoom Meeting*