

John's Revelation of Jesus

(Sub Theme: The Proper Stance for Prophetic Giftings)

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Part One

We'll start in Isaiah 40.

40¹ Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. ² Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned (There is hope): for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. ³ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

There is comfort that God has for us and for those who know us. There is a way of peace in the midst of a world that does not know peace, and can never know peace without God, and without us, the church. We are the ones to bring peace upon the earth through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

We preached on that last Sunday. How wonderful it is that this doesn't depend upon how high or wonderful we feel, either how empowered or how badly. We still know the purposes of God: to bring compassion upon the earth, to bring His lovingkindness down in *our* bodies in the works that we do, and the things that we say coming out of our mouths.

⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: . . .

Do you know why?

. . . for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The Prophetic Voice

The prophetic voice is needed in the world today. It is not something for just the past. It is needed *today*. We need to be encouraged. The teachers and the evangelists cannot breath the encouragement that the prophets can. So let me speak to you, prophets, *it is not for you to be*

glorified. It is not for you to somehow make an impact by what you say and how wonderful that prophesy was. It is for the encouragement of the body of Christ to come forth in that duty they have been called to, to bring lovingkindness upon the earth, in our lives personally, in the church and in all those around us. Do not be caught up in the prophesy itself. Be tuned in to the Giver of the prophesy who is the Lord of lords.

Glory and Darkness

In Isaiah 60:2

² *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: . . .*

What does that really mean? Real evil, *gross* darkness, things you don't want to see. Things that are too awful to speak about and conceive in your mind. Gross darkness covers the people. You don't believe it? It is happening all around us right now. You only have to have eyes to see. But:

. . . but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Isaiah is talking about the church. His glory shall be seen upon **you**. So the glory of the Lord isn't just to make you feel good. The glory of the Lord is so that other people can see that Jesus Christ is Lord and King. His Kingdom is here upon the earth.

³ *And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, . . .*

Those that don't have any idea of what it means and what it should be, they will come.

. . . and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Matthew 4:16

¹⁶ *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*

Isn't that good? We celebrate that scripture at Christmas. These things happen upon the earth and people are totally oblivious to it. Young people are being drawn to mega churches and to concerts of Hill Song and other groups to worship the Lord. Why? Because they see a light. Finally they see a light and it wasn't in the Protestant denominations. Rather it is in the glory of God as He is restoring worship upon the earth.

Psalm 24:7-11

⁷ *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting (ancient) doors;*

These doors have been closed too long. They have been shut up and blocked up.

⁸ *Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*

Is there any weakness in Him we might ask?

⁹ *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.* ¹⁰ *Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.*

Is that true? Are you ready? Open up those doors of your heart because He wants to come in. He wants to reside there. He wants to be there. Amen.

I remember looking at the Milky Way galaxy at night. Many of you have seen the Milky Way. In a dark sky you can see it in the Sagittarius star cloud, the center of our galaxy. Beautiful. You can see colors even with the naked eye. If you are out there try and spend at least 10-15 minutes looking at it so your eyes can adjust to the darkness. Once you do, you see what many say is the most beautiful thing one could ever look at, the Milky Way galaxy. It is awesome to see the creation and the majesty of God. The bible says He made the stars and He named them all! One of the things that I saw was this huge darkness in the galaxy. The Lord spoke to me prophetically and said, *“Open up the doors! Open up the ancient doors, let Him come in!”* He wants to be here. He wants to be in everyone of our hearts, not just to make Glory happen here but that the Glory would spill out to the point we wouldn't be able to contain Him. That's a pretty dangerous thing. There is a part of me that would say I just want to have control. I still like things in me from the denominational churches that shouldn't be there. I like the order. But if you block off the Holy Spirit so that you can no longer hear the voice of God, you have missed everything.

However *when you open those ancient doors in the Spiritual realm, other spirits can come in too!* In our sensitivity to the things of the Spirit, and the prophets know this, we try to discern what is God and what is not God. Isn't that right? We have to step out in faith. When we do that, get ready, it is the elders responsibility to correct you when you are wrong. It is also their responsibility, more importantly, to encourage you when you are right!

The Gospels' Picture of Jesus

I have been teaching for quite a while on the life of Christ as seen from the gospels to give you an idea of who Jesus really was when He walked upon the earth, the Jesus who cared so much for His disciples, the One who gave them parable after parable about what the Kingdom of God is and who He is. But we also notice He was a very combative and confrontational individual, provoking the Sadducees and the Pharisees and those who liked the Law, those who would prevent the Sabbath rest of God from happening in their lives because it was Saturday, the Law in those days. They even wanted to prevent Jesus from healing a man as I spoke about last week. It was a tragedy to see a whole generation go down the tubes because they misunderstood the Sabbath rest of God. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and He lives in you every day not just on Saturday or Sunday or whenever you want to celebrate it. He lives in you every day and every moment that belongs to you. You don't have to ask the Lord to make the Sabbath rest happen. This church doesn't belong to you. It doesn't belong to our eldership. It doesn't belong to us. It is Jesus' church; whether it lives or dies as a fellowship is up to Him and your obedience to Him as we will see later on.

Part Two

John's Revelation of Jesus

The church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets. The Apostle John, in the gospel of John, through his epistles, and John through the book of Revelation, was presenting the concept of who he believed God the Father was and is in the Lord Jesus Christ, Very God of very God. Jesus wasn't just the Son of Man. He was also the Son of God. Jesus wasn't just the historical Jesus that healed and made everybody feel good like we saw last Sunday, healing everyone of them! Every last one. That must have been some prayer meeting. And He healed them all. Let that permeate every cell in your body. He wants to heal them all, your bones, your joints, every organ. He wants to heal them all. Who doesn't want that?

The enemy doesn't want that to happen. But who's side are we on? The Lord's. Therefore we keep praying. We keep and are steadfast in the purpose of prayer. Well you might say to me, "*Well, my prayers aren't being answered.*" I don't care! You are to pray! You are to lift up. Don't give up. Don't stop. Don't stop short of the Glory of God that He has for you.

And so we see that John wrote the gospel and the epistles and thought that should be enough. However, I don't know how old he was when he wrote Revelations, at least in his 90's. That's encouragement to me that I might still have a ministry ahead when I get to be that old. Don't give up. There is still a word that God has for you and *in* you to speak to those around you, a word of encouragement like our sister just shared this morning. She had no idea of what ramifications would come from the word she spoke and gave to her friend, from what she thought was such a small thing. But it brought life to someone who had no hope of finding her birth mother!

What a blessing we are to the people on this earth. We are a blessing and meant to be a blessing. Things are really bad right now. Things are really tragic. All we could think to ourselves is how God is dealing with us. But, let's put that aside for now. God is dealing with you as we are being conformed into His image. So if He isn't dealing with you, He will. But, that is not really what it is all about right now! It is about the expression of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, the Kingdom of God through you, no longer tied to the Law. No longer conditional upon how we might feel, how high or how low. It is not conditional on those things. It is in you to *steadfastly* bring forth His church, to bring forth His purpose, His intent, His heart. . .

And so, my goal is to know the heart of God. It is not good enough for me to just know the will of God, although I want to. It is not good enough for me to just know His intent. I want to know the heart of God! It is His heart to bring forth TRUE LOVE upon this earth, not one that is conditional, but a love that will *crush* the enemy, a love that will bring forth joy like you have never seen it before, a love that cannot be stopped by the borders of a building or the borders of a church, or even the borders of your life. It will continue on its own initiative. You won't have to go to home group to push things along, get the worship going. You won't have to have a worship leader. This will have a momentum all of its own. The Holy Spirit, when it is poured out on the church, *will not be stopped!* That is what John saw in the book of Revelations. So let's turn there.

The Jesus of Revelations

It is a different Jesus here. Agree? The same One but He isn't concerned about the Pharisees any more. Never once is it mentioned in Revelations about concepts concerning the Law. There were other things He is more concerned about. He doesn't show up here nailed on the Cross. He has already done that work, forgiven you of your sins,

brought you to repentance. We are so grateful for what He did on the Cross. Yet sometimes we come before each other almost boastfully saying, “*We have the right to represent God.*” We should remember how wonderful it is but also to be *awestruck* of our responsibility that God Himself dwells within us. You are now holy where you were not holy. You were evil and He still loved you. He rescued you.

Knowing all that, in his old age, John sees Jesus. Let’s look at the Revelation of Jesus Christ starting in chapter one.

1¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; .

. . .

So this is a prophecy. This guy is seeing things which quite honestly I don’t think I would like to see. When I look at Ezekiel, I see some things there I don’t want to see either, scary things. People paint a picture at funerals that heaven is going to be this peaceful place where we sit in a rocking chair and dwell in the presence of God forevermore or reading poetry. I don’t know what else they think. However, I’ve got news for you; it is going to be scary. It is going to be excitingly scary, an adventure you are not prepared for!

. . . and He sent and signified it by His angel unto his servant John:

So this angel was a witness of what John saw as well.

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

The angel himself was not identified but he saw things that John saw as well.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, . . .

So it is not a curse to read Revelation. It is a good thing. We have to keep reminding ourselves that there is good stuff in here.

. . . and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Now he wrote these things some time ago but the time is near to us now as we see the darkness covering the face of the earth and gross darkness the people who know the time is getting nearer. Isn’t that true? However know that in that time good things are going to be happening as well.

Malachi 4:1

4¹ For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

This is a judgment that is final!

*2 But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and **you** shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. ³ And **you** shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of **your** feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.*

So when that judgment and curse comes upon the earth it will NOT be a curse to you! That same sun that will scorch the earth and the enemy will be a blessing to you! The Sun of righteousness spelled Sun. It shall have healing in its wings! Ah. Let the healing of the Lord come forth upon the earth in you. It is for you.

So in the book of Revelation He begins to address the churches that He is going to talk to which is supposedly all the churches that John knew.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, . . .

What is that first word? Grace! Yeah, is that a surprise. It is not a surprise to me. Most of the time the first words that the Lord speaks to me is, "*Peace, grace. Come on. What is your problem. Grace to you. Peace.*" If I wake up in the middle of the night with a nightmare and start talking to the Lord, "*Grace and peace to you,*" says the Lord.

. . . from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; ⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Who's in charge? Over President Trump? Jesus. Over El Qaeda? Jesus. Over Iran? Jesus. Over the Democratic party? Jesus. Over the Republican party? Jesus. Over History? Jesus. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He is not retreating. He is not abdicating His throne to anyone.

*. . . Unto Him that **loved** us, . . .*

Has He ever stopped loving you? He will NEVER stop.

. . . and (He) washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . .

John immediately goes to the Cross. He doesn't diminish that as passé since it has already been accomplished. Rather he reminds himself of the glory that God manifested on the Cross for the washing away of our sin and because of that:

⁶ . . . And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

He is saying our Savior is completely omnipotent without any restriction of power. If you have a revelation, if you have a prophesy remember He is omnipotent. You don't have to coax a prophesy into happening. You don't have to re-explain God. Listen to His voice and His only. It is *really easy to be caught up in the emotion* of it all as John was also. I remember the first prophesy I had I couldn't stop shaking. I was trying to figure out what God was doing. But do not be caught up in the emotion of it. Put that aside. John said:

⁷ Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, . . .

It won't be just you, prophets. Every eye will see Him.

. . . and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

They are so sad because they treated Him so badly; they missed it. They are going to be sad on that day. Somehow they were not listening to you, the church. They were not listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. They will be sad on that day when He comes. Amen. There *will* be the second coming of Christ. Some churches don't believe that and don't preach it any more. He is coming in the clouds and every eye will see. And He will say:

. . . I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Vision of Jesus in All His Glory

Is there any doubt that Jesus is God? Is there any doubt that He is Very God of very God? Is there any doubt that He is not just the Son of Man born of a woman? Is there any doubt that He is indeed the very Word of God? He is the *exact* representation of the Father. John wants to make sure you know in the book of Revelation that there is no doubt in his mind. When Jesus spoke these words:

. . . which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

⁹ I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, . . .

Well, yeah. If I saw that vision I would probably do what John did, identifying with his reader as a fellow man with similar problems. We may have problems but we are to endure the problems.

. . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

¹¹ Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

So while minding his own business John heard this sound. It is almost like Samuel. Samuel was minding his own business and he hears, “*Samuel!*” Immediately he goes to his mentor and asks what is going on. Eli tells him to go back and see if the Lord speaks to him again. “*Samuel!*” Samuel goes back again. Don’t give up. Listen to the word of the Lord.

¹² And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. . .

There is a turning. Even if you are filled with the Spirit the Lord wants you to seek Him. He will “hide” from you in a sense. But there will be a place when you turn to hear the voice of the Lord.

. . . And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; ¹³ And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Just that alone would be something to see. I have some gold on my finger which signifies my relationship with my wife which is dear to my heart. It is a covenant I made with her. There is a band of gold around His chest which represents a covenant which He has in His heart to you. He is not about to give up on it. He is not going to change that girt for any gold that He can find on the earth. What a wonderful thing. Many times in a prophetic word, there are things that are hidden for you to find. I’m just pointing out one. This has become my favorite verse in the bible:

¹⁴ His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.

. . .

You know my hair turned white not too long ago. I was sad in a way, but my wife said, *“Oh no. Don’t be sad. That is a good thing. In fact there are many verses in the Old Testament that says white hair is a sign of wisdom, a sign of honor for you to have white hair.”* Any way I laughed when I read this scripture thinking, *“Oh yeah. I get it.”* So we see He has on these garments with the gold band around His chest and His hair is white as snow!

. . . and His eyes were as a flame of fire; . . .

Not eyes that are scary necessarily but eyes that are piercing as One who knows and can judge perfectly the things that are in your heart. Remember the Holy Spirit. John said He is going to baptize you with fire. Look out because that fire cannot be quenched. It is going to be one that can see the innermost parts of your heart.

¹⁵ And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace .

. . .

So not just like a metal. It is going to be like a brass refined in a furnace, glowing.

. . . and His voice as the sound of many waters. . . .

Okay. Go to Niagra Falls and try talking to someone standing next to you. It is almost impossible to hear them. You have to shout and yell. Here we see so many words coming forth from the waters that every drop is speaking the praise and the glory of God. When deep calls unto deep that’s what the psalmist was talking about, that drop of water speaking to the ocean! Now a single drop of water, everyone can hear. Ping. But when you put all those pings together it is the sound of many waters, a roaring thunder!

. . . ¹⁶ And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword . . .

And that two edged sword we know is the Word of God separating what is God and what is not God.

. . . and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength . . .

It wasn’t like the sun at sunset but rather at full noon. When the sun shines at full strength you’d better be ready for it.

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

When John saw this he didn’t go, *“Ho hum. Thank You, Lord. That was a great revelation. Let’s build three tabernacles here,”* like His disciples wanted to do on the Mount of Transfiguration, thinking it

was really awesome stuff. It's time to build a temple. No, he fell at his feet. We need to be like John. Prophets, listen to me. Maybe you need to be like John *falling down at His feet before you say anything*, in your spirit. When John saw Him he fell at His feet *as dead!* Knowing who he was, a human being, knowing the work of the Cross. Knowing all the things that Jesus is and the power and the almighty presence of God there is only one response that a human being can have. Yeah. So prophets, first "fall dead" before you prophesy. We don't want to hear you. We want to hear God! But listen to this:

. . . And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, "Fear not" . . .

Now there is something about touching. It isn't just an act. There is something that is *imparted*. Jesus reached out with His right hand and touched John. His right hand is the power of might. His right hand is the one that is going to bring forth the things upon the earth. But in this instance it was for John to be reassured, to not be afraid. One might ask the question, "*How can you not be afraid in the presence of the almighty God?*" In our natural sun, if you got to the orbit of Mercury, there wouldn't be much hope for you because of the heat temperature. How can we not be afraid of God?! We are commanded to not be afraid of God because of the love of God that casts out all fear. We must be immersed in the love of God. Prophets, listen, you must be immersed in the love of God. Don't come from any other place, lest you be burned up.

I love it when the Lord places His hand upon us. Sometimes when you are in prayer, can you feel the hands of God on you? I have. Sometimes it is when a person is praying for me and they have their hands on me. The Lord says, "*Those are not his hands. They are Mine.*" Have you heard that voice? He wants to use you as He wills. I love the Lord. He is not afraid of the power resident within Him. He is not afraid of it.

. . . Fear not; I am the first and the last: ¹⁸ I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. . . .

And by the way, they have no victory over Me. Wow. "*John, don't be afraid but by the way I am He. By the way, I have the keys to hell and to heaven.*"

¹⁹ Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter . . .

So, Jesus is saying, “Get ready. Prophecy is coming.

²⁰ *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

This occurred to me: the church is a universal-one church. However the fellowships within each church have a personality. A community of believers has a personality. You are a part of the universal church. There is only one church, the church of Jesus Christ. But, knowing that, each separate fellowship has a personality because we all as individuals have personalities and our individualism is important to God as we will see in a few minutes. I am personally glad that we are all different, especially glad that you are not me. Think about it. If you just had yourself to live with for a while, it would be kind of scary! I would get bored with just myself after a while. Right? That is why the Lord gave us the Word of God. We can immediately all by ourselves go immediately into the bible, into prayer. We can pray for other people. We should stop being so myopic. Yes, God is dealing with you. Yes, God is changing you into His purposes and likeness. But, God has a purpose for you and those who are suffering an illness. We can pray, not just in home groups, not just in times of prayer after this meeting, but every day and in every moment that God gives us the heart to pray. Pray!

I don't know how many times I pray for the “prodigals.” I am ever praying for them, those who have left and those that I know God is calling back, those that the enemy has no hope for and wants no hope for. I still have hope! I will verbalize that. Just as Jesus says, “*I am the First and the Last. I still have hope for that person. I have not given up. Yes, I have heard them talk about killing of children before they are born and how unimportant that is. Yes, I have heard their words!*” But, Lord, call them back! Call them back to the gospel of peace! Call them back to the gospel of life. Call them back to You, Yourself. Call them back to the Cross, a place of repentance. “*Lord, that they would arrive here with tears in their eyes not through violence, that the enemy wants, but through the tears of repentance.*”

And they would say, “*Oh, how wrong have I been that I did not know, that I chose my own way. I left those people who loved me for people who didn't. I left for a world that was more concerned about what they were being fed, how much money they have, being liked by others, etc. I left my fellowship because I wanted those things in my life more*

than I wanted Your love, more than I wanted the glory of God to manifest through me.” A lot of people leave the church for different reasons but one of them is because they are afraid that God would take them and make them a missionary some where in South America or Africa and they don’t want to go there. That is crazy stuff to think about. God will take you wherever He wants to take you anyway. But it will be a good thing. The Lord says, **“*I have plans for you and they are plans for good not evil.*”**

Open up the gates! Let the King of Glory come in! Invite Him in. John’s revelation of Jesus in the gospel was one of confronting the Pharisees, preaching the parables, healing the sick, reaching out to those who had no hope. John’s revelation of Jesus in his epistles was one of the Holy Spirit moving and being motivated by that Holy Spirit, a place of obedience and love like we never knew it before. But here in the book of Revelation we see a different Jesus, One who is in command and in control, One who is never going to relinquish His power, One who cannot because He is the almighty God.

Ephesus, Our First Love

The first thing He says here is not to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, not to His glory upon the earth, but to His church with individual personalities, individual fellowships, the church at Ephesus. This was a church that had lost what they needed to get back, their first love. He also spoke this word to us, the church in the 70’s, the 80’s, and 90’s. He speaks to the church in the millennium, this wonderful time we are living in where darkness is starting to come in. He is still speaking the same word:

2¹ Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Listen, Jesus’ concept here is not someone standing by waiting for us to fail. Rather He is walking in our midst, in the personality of the fellowships. How can He be in the politics of the individual churches? But, there He is! He is saying that He’s doing it. He isn’t just leaving it up to the eldership, nor to the home groups, nor to you and me. He, Himself, is here! Walking in and among us. . . among and in the midst of “seven golden lamp stands.” He isn’t leaving us behind as orphans saying, *“I wonder how they are going to do?”* By the way, how could they do very well without Him?! He said this:

Revelation 2:¹ I know your works, your labor, you patience. . .

He knows the goodness that we have.

. . .that you cannot bear those who are evil.

Thank You, Jesus. Finally someone recognizes what I have done well.

You have tested those who say they are apostles and they are not.

Yay, that's true

You have persevered and have patiently labored for My names sake and have not become weary.

Woah! Yeah. That's pretty good stuff. Put that on my tombstone. Get ready though.

Nevertheless I have this against you.

You know the Lord doesn't just come against you with things of correction but He wants you to know that there is genuine good in your life which you have embraced, the compassion and the goodness of God. Don't give that up and when He corrects you, hold on. You say, *"Yes, Lord, I know. I am glad You still love me. I'm glad You still work Your miracles through me. I'm listening to You because I WANT to change. I want to hear what I'm doing wrong."* Don't you?

*Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your **first love.***

What a wound that would bring to my spirit. And yet I know that time after time I forget the first love that I had. You know how I remember the best? I look at Cheryl, my wife, and say, *"Lord, I need to say and show how much I love her today just as much as I did when I first met her."* The Lord says, *"Yeah, and Me too."* The Lord is seeking your love. He doesn't take it for granted. He doesn't think, *"Oh, I know they love Me."* He does but He wants to hear it. Therefore there is almost never a day I don't tell Cheryl that I love her. I don't think there is a day that I don't say, *"Lord, I love you."* His response is always the same. *"How much do you love Me?" "It is getting better every day. I love You, Lord, so much that I cannot hold it back. I don't want to hold it back."*

I begin to see things in this world differently, a lot differently. I do not just see the evil and the darkness that's covering Texas and Ohio only yesterday. But I see the mercy of God that is extended out to those families as the pastors are gathered together and Franklin Graham sent them down to bring healing to those families that have been broken-hearted. There are many who are reaching out in compassion. One might say, *"All I can do is pray."* That isn't ALL you can do. If that is

the only thing you can do, it is good! That is the start. That is the purpose of God for you to pray for those who are suffering. Don't neglect it.

I cannot imagine Jesus turning away from somebody whom He didn't heal and say, "*Okay, I don't care about them anymore.*" I cannot even imagine that. Those prayers still go forth. He says this after reminding them they had left their first love:

⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, . . .

What do we need to do? Repent, turn and purpose to do something different. . . to do what? Your first works. I used to think about things I could do to communicate to Cheryl how much I love her. I used to think about things I could do with the Lord to reassure how much I love Him, to reassure me how much I loved Him! Learning a new song on my guitar sounds trivial, but I would do it. I will go into the home group with a word of encouragement. Let me seek the Lord in the scriptures today for someone in particular. Where have all those works gone? Well, they are still there in your heart. You just need to stir them up.

It doesn't have to be a "big deal." It could just be a word of encouragement to yourself. You can look into the heavens, at the stars and think about something they mean to you, the creation of God. Let His love come in. Don't let the enemy in because as you open up yourself to the things of the Spirit, the enemy will be right there and say, "*Oh, I'll come in with all the craziness of the New Age.*" I'm not talking about New Age love, nor New Age prophetic prophecy, all the things they can do, false prophecy, false healings. I'm talking about the real ones they can accomplish. I don't want to think about all these things. There is enough fake stuff happening. Some *are* being healed. **It is absolutely real and true but from the wrong camp.**

I don't know how many of you know about diabetes. I have type two diabetes. Regardless I know what happens to my blood sugar when I eat different foods. For instance Cheryl made a chocolate chip banana cake. My baseline sugar went from the baseline of 114 to right up to 240 and stayed there for three hours. I didn't know how to handle that kind of stuff.

It is interesting, different kinds of sugars and different kinds of things that your body responds differently to. If I eat just raw sugar, it will go up and then right down again. My body knows it is real sugar.

The pancreas will say I need sugar and here it is. But if you disguise it in those bananas, the body doesn't respond well at all.

Well, you have been given the Spirit of revelation and understanding to discern reality from fake, what is real and what is not real. That is basically what He's saying to the church in Ephesus. *"You know how to make these discernments. You know how to do this."*

⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

He isn't going to remove your salvation but if the whole church goes into the wrong direction, it doesn't have a life of its own any more. The Holy Spirit cannot reside in a church that doesn't love Him. This is about a love affair that you have with Jesus Christ. It is an adventure you have with Him. It is an exciting thing you have with Him. When you lose that you have lost it unless you repent. But then He reminds them:

⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Does Jesus hate things? Yeah He sure does. He hates false things. This whole movement of the Nicolaitans was exactly that, a false church, a false hope, a false prophecy, a false testimony. There is one thing over and over again that really makes Jesus angry. That is a *false witness*. Do you know that. "False witness" is repeated over and over again. Every time it comes up in the New Testament you can FEEL the animosity of the Holy Spirit against it. We are to be people of truth and honesty. When you go before the Sanhedrin, whatever that might be, your boss, a court, your friends who accuse you, you don't have to prepare a text. The disciples knew that. They spoke that to each other. You only need the Holy Spirit within you to discern between the truth and lies. Bring forth the peace and the grace and the mercy of God into every bad situation you find yourself in. That is a wondrous thing to do. Oftentimes the Lord has already used your voice. Listen, He has used you in the words you have prayed for others up front in church meetings. Everyone of you He has used in prayer.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

You have to be open to hear what Jesus is saying prophetically. Prophets, you are not special. The whole church is to be a prophetic church. You are not the only ones hearing a word; the entire church will

be hearing God that way. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. You only need to be open to it.

⁷ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Do you hear that? Isn't that where Adam and Eve got kicked out? Isn't that what the Lord guarded with a flaming sword so no one could come to into it? Wasn't the tree of knowledge of good and evil forbidden? But we see in this scripture He has given you eternal life through that same tree, the tree of life. That tree is the Lord Jesus Himself. You cannot have life within you unless He Himself is in you and you are eating of Him every day. Eating the bread of life means we are eating of His goodness. We are eating, feeding, listening to every word that comes from His mouth. We are listening for Him to come. In the Garden they said they could hear the Father in the wind. Even when they were fallen they knew He was there. They still have an ear to hear.

I believe there are people in this world that have the ear to hear and the enemy is coming in with false prophecy. The enemy is coming in with false religion and is coming in all different kinds of ways to give people a substitute for reality. But we have THE reality. Not because of something we do but because of the word of God. Not because we are so special but because of the word of God. You can eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, His full, complete provision. Let's go back to Malachi:

⁴ "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. ² But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.

The last scripture for today in spite of the fact that many are mourning in the world and we want to be sensitive to that. We shouldn't be insensitive to that. . . *"This doesn't affect the church. It doesn't affect me what happened in Texas."* What if it was Walmart in Kingston? It could easily have been. We need to reach out in our hearts for those who are mourning. But GUARD ourselves because we are not ones who are sick. We are ones who are alive and well because in Philippians 4:7:

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Guard our hearts from what? **From a sadness.** This peace that Jesus gives us is one where we KNOW that God is in charge com-

pletely, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings over everything. He will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So that's our prayer.

Father, we know the enemy's works. We are getting to know them more intimately than we ever wanted to. But our gospel isn't about the enemy. Our gospel is about the Prince of Peace, the One whom we worship every Sunday, the One whom we worship everyday, when we come together and fellowship on Wednesday nights, even times when we meet in the grocery store, with fellow Christians when we meet anywhere. We are about fellowshiping around You, Lord Jesus, the love we have toward You. We pray, Lord God, that it would not be a love that is cloistered away, self serving and self seeking, and inward turning. But that it would be outward. Open up the gates of our hearts, O God, that we would see those in the world that are reaching out. The enemy would not have them as "toast." The enemy would not steal them away. The Prodigal would return with tears in their eyes, a heart that is cleaned and refreshed. They would fall down at the Cross as if dead because they see the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, and He washed away their sin with His blood. This is no trivial thing that you have done for us, Lord God.

I pray for those who prophesy and those who are going to prophesy, I pray for those prophets and those who pray prophetically, those who think prophetically, those who have never prophesied who have a prophesy in their heart. I pray for us, Lord God, that You would bring forth the TRUTH of who You are and who we are. That we would humbly walk in that not presuming that we know. But we would come forth with a purity of understanding of the written and living word of God as it is to be expressed in our environment in this day, in our home groups, the place where we are in this world.

I pray for a special anointing for those who are going down to Texas and Ohio and other places to bring forth that word of peace to a place where there is no peace. Lord, I pray for our country, our nation, I pray for a world that is so messed up. All they can think about is stealing another oil tanker. How stupid is that. There are stupid things happening. But there is One who is never stupid. There is One who stands before the universe as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Alpha, the Omega, the very word of God, the almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent. And He is the One we worship today. Amen.