

In The Potter's Hand

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Date: 06 March 2026

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[0 : 00] Greetings from Colorado. And those of you that weren't there, you missed a blessing. He had a message there at the youth meetings, and I said he preached one of my messages this weekend.

And then Sunday, Phil preached another one of them. So, at least for you youth that were there, you might hear some things twice, but we won't go there this evening so much.

But I would like to turn to Malachi chapter 3. And I think I will start here.

I wasn't sure about this, but I think I will start here. And it's something the Lord had spoken to me personally a few weeks back. One morning, and I wrote it down, and I read it to the church at home. And I think I'll just read it here. And then here, Phil was not there that Sunday. I read this. And Sunday at the youth meetings, he got up and he preached on this. And he was in Mexico.

[1 : 30] I think this was, I'm not sure, was it two weeks? Three weeks ago, maybe. When I read this at home. But just taken out of Malachi chapter 3.

And I'm going to read a few verses here. Beginning in verse 8. Will a man rob God? What a question, right?

Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house. And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts. If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devour for your sakes. And he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground.

Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed.

[2 : 38] For ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts. We're not speaking of tithes and offerings tonight. But when the Lord ministered to me out of this, or began to speak to me out of this, I was studying in 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

And I think we'll go there probably later this, or yeah, later this week, weekend. And also Romans 7 and 8. And I've been looking a lot lately into the covenant, the glory of the new covenant.

And I was looking there in 2 Corinthians 3, and we'll touch on some of that later this week. But how the new covenant is so much greater and better and more glorious than the old covenant.

And I would just say that the old covenant was written with the finger of God, but it was written on tablets of stone.

But 2 Corinthians 3 says the new covenant is written on our hearts. Who writes it there? Preacher?

[4 : 04] God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit writes it on our hearts. Which is better? It's not even a comparison, is it? But I was looking at 2 Corinthians 3, and when God spoke to me, and it was just a revelation to me.

We sang that song, Jesus, keep me near the cross. As we were singing that song, I thought of that phrase, the glorious... Something about the glorious gain of the cross.

I wasn't sure where it was, and then we sang the second song, and that phrase is in there. But I do hope, by God's grace, at the end of this weekend, we'll have a different picture of the cross.

We cannot live to self and to Christ at the same time. We can't live for self, to the curse of self, and to God for the glory of God at the same time.

The cross. The cross is an exchange. And the cross is an instrument of death. It's not pretty. Last weekend, I made this statement, and I think it was made maybe by Tozer.

[5 : 33] And again, I praise God for such men. Andrew Murray, A.W. Tozer. Some of their writings have, I'll just say, have left a very deep impact in my life.

Have set the course of my life. Some of their teachings. I believe it was Tozer that said, we can only do one of two things with the cross. We can flee from it or die upon it.

And to the old man, I know because I've been there. The price looks great. And you're not quite sure, is this for me or not?

I've been at that place years ago. But once God deals with us and brings us to a point of desperation like Paul, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

The cross becomes our release and our victory over our greatest enemy, which is self. And I trust that at the end of this weekend, we can see the cross in a very beautiful way.

[6 : 40] As something that works daily in our lives. As I was looking at 2 Corinthians 3, and I guess it just dawned upon me that I'm to be a habitation of God through the Spirit.

The new covenant is Christ. It's not just a book of rules. It's Christ. And all the old covenant and the laws of the old covenant, they were all a type of Christ.

But the new covenant is Christ himself. And when God gave the commandments to Moses, two tables of stone, and we would picture five commandments on one and five on the other, because that's how we've seen it in the storybooks.

But according to scholars, God gave Moses one tablet with ten commandments, and another tablet with ten commandments. And a covenant, again, I will just emphasize, a covenant is different than a contract.

It is a contract. A covenant is legally binding, but a contract is just based... I can have a contract with somebody I don't have a relationship with. But a covenant is based on an intimate relationship.

[7 : 58] And when there was a covenant made or a contract made in those days, one was for each party. It was to be kept in a safe place. But when God said to Moses, you keep both of the copies there in the Ark of the Covenant, it was the holy place for the children of Israel, the holy of holies.

But it was also God's holy place. And what God was saying, in effect, is that my holy place, my sacred place where I dwell is the same as yours.

And we keep both copies there. And to think of that, that God is saying to me and to you under the new covenant that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Your heart is my holy dwelling place where I want to live. And through the power of my Holy Spirit, write Christ on your heart.

That when people see you, they don't see who you used to be. They see Christ. They see the glory of Christ. And I was just meditating on that. And God began to speak to me.

[9 : 08] And it broke me. And after that, I realized God's love and mercy mean a lot more when we see ourselves in the light of how God sees.

And I'm just going to read what God ministered to me that day. It was, I think it was three weeks ago on a Saturday. Well, a man robbed God.

Yet you have robbed me. You say, how have we robbed you? You have robbed me by holding back part of the price and reserving something for yourself.

I paid an awful, gut-wrenching, heartbreaking price for you to save you from an eternal damnation. I gave it all.

I held nothing back from you to make you my own special people. I gave my only son to save you and make you my own holy, sacred dwelling place.

[10 : 10] I said that I will be all for you so that you can be all for me. Yet you have robbed me and defrauded me of my holy dwelling place by allowing things of self.

You've defrauded me. Of my glory and honor by allowing self-opinions, ideas, selfish agendas, self-confidence, self-seeking, selfish ambitions, and my holy place that I long to fill with my glory, my beauty, and my holy presence.

You've held on to things and allowed idols in your heart. Of which I said, this is my holy dwelling place where I will live. I paid a great price for you because I love you and long to dwell in you.

And I love the world and long to reveal my son to the world through you. I'm not here to condemn you for robbing me, but to plead with you. I invite you to come to me and commit yourself fully into my hand, into the hand of the potter.

Will you give me everything? Give me your past and I'll heal it and redeem it. Give me your present and I'll meet your every need. Give me your future and I'll give you a secure, eternal future beyond your imagination.

[11:40] Give me your heart and I'll give you my heart. Give me your feeble mind, thoughts, and ideas. And I'll give you my mind and thoughts, which is abundant life and peace.

Give me your wounds and I'll give you my healing. Give me your pain and I'll give you my peace. Give me your weakness and I'll give you my strength.

Give me your bondage and I'll give you my freedom. Give me your unforgiveness and I'll give you my forgiveness. Give me your anxiety and fear and I'll give you my rest. Give me your burdens and cares and I'll give you my burden, which is light.

Give me all your sin and I'll give you my righteousness. You have robbed me by holding back and it has hindered me from revealing my glory. Will you repent of your unbelief and mistrust?

Will you place everything you are and have into my hand? Will you let go of everything and let me have my way with you? My blood can cleanse your heart and make you free.

[12:43] My power can make you what you ought to be. My spirit can stand my nature in you. Prove me and see. If you will give me everything, I will open the windows of heaven and pour my blessing of life, my spirit upon you.

I will make you a blessing to the end of the earth. Place yourself fully without reserve in my hand. I will break you to empty you of yourself and imperfection.

But whom I break, I will shape. I will shape you and mold you into the beautiful image of my son.

And whom I shape, I will fill with my Holy Spirit of love, life, and power.

It will not be the vessel that's important, but what is within the vessel. I have brought you to the kingdom for such a time as this. The devil is unleashing his hate and fury upon the world, but I long to unleash the power of my presence through my people.

Will you be my holy, sacred dwelling place? Will you be ever only all for me? Will you give yourself fully into my hand? I long to shape you and make you a vessel of honor for my son to live through.

[13:50] I know you've failed me. But I invite you to come. I'll forgive you and put you back on the wheel if only you'll trust me completely.

This is the acceptable year of the Lord. I'm longing to reveal my glory to you and through you. My heart goes out to those who don't know me and the time is short. I long to reveal myself to them through you.

Will you trust and place your life fully in my hand? If you will, I'll do the rest.

So, part of the tithes and offerings was part of the covenant.

And the children of Israel had failed to keep their end of the covenant. Both the old covenant and the new covenant were made because God loves his people.

[15:17] When God does a work on the earth, he makes a covenant. And I believe the first covenant we read about is Noah. When he brought Noah and his family out of the ark, he placed a bow in the sky.

And he said, I'm not going to again destroy the earth with a flood. But when God went to find a people for himself, he found Abraham.

He made a covenant with Abraham. When Saul failed God and God looked for a man after his own heart, he found David. He made a covenant with David.

We know that the seed of Christ came through Abraham. We know the seed of Christ came through David. And now in these last days when Christ came, again, the old covenant was not sufficient.

But God made a covenant. When he desired to pour out his spirit upon all flesh, he made a covenant. And God's working, God works within the parameters of his covenant.

[16:26] So we can walk in his covenant or we can reject it. And here he said, you're cursed because you've not kept your part of the covenant.

You've not walked in my covenant. But then he says, bring the tithes into the storehouse. And again, we're not talking, this may apply financially, but it applies to much more than financially.

Andrew Murray says that the key to the blessing of God is absolute surrender. The key to the blessing of God.

We all want the blessing of God, right? We know we need the blessing of God. I trust we do. But God says, prove me. Now, I might be wrong.

You can correct me. I don't think there's any other place in the word of God where God says that. Prove me. Now, there might be. I'm not sure. But this is one place. God says, prove me.

[17:29] And I know God spoke this to me personally. It put me flat on my face before God. I just know that my unbelief, my mistrust, how many times have I again and again and again robbed God

of opportunities, robbed God of his glory.

Because I didn't just trust him and yield everything to him. And when I see it in that light, the mercy of God means a lot more to me. The patience of God, the long suffering of God.

And I don't want to exploit that. But God has been so patient and so long suffering with me, with us. But God says, prove me and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there's not room enough to contain it.

That's the heart of God. God wants to pour it out that it would overflow out of our lives and affect the world. In fact, I've, several places where God has moved among his people throughout the world, it has reduced crime in half in those communities.

That's part of the blessing of God. This earth is under a curse. But if the blessing of God overflows, Jesus said, I've come to give life and to give it more abundantly.

[19 : 01] There's life, but then there's abundant life that overflows and ministers to those around us. And that's how God is glorified.

And that's the heart of God. God longs to do that. Again, this is a statement by Andrew Murray. It is the will of God for each one of his children to be entirely and unceasingly under the control of the Holy Spirit.

What does such a life look like? John chapter 7. We'll touch briefly here and then, Lord willing, end of the week, end here. We'll come back to this again.

The new covenant is this, that I am the temple of the Holy Ghost.

I've been bought with the blood of Jesus. If I've been bought with the blood of Jesus, Satan has no claim on me. If I'm covered by the blood of Jesus, hell has no claim on me. This world has no claim on me.

[20 : 05] Sin has no claim on me. But also the other side is if I've been bought with the blood of Jesus, I am fully his. I have no claim on myself. And if I take that back, I'm robbing God of what he has bought with his blood.

Of what he's shed his, of what he's given his life for. Shed his blood for and paid a price for. But John chapter 7, verse 37 and 38.

39 as well. And the last day that was the most important day of the feast, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

And I guess, I just love the invitation of Jesus. Over and over in the word of God, he says, come, come. You failed me.

You've fallen short of my glory. But in spite of all our past, God says again and again, he says, come. Come to me. And here he says again, if any man thirst, let him come.

[21 : 14] So the question is where? Not whether God is saying come. The question is, do you thirst? Do you see your great need?

And we can't come to the answer unless we recognize the problem. If we do not see where we have robbed God.

If we do not see the glory of the new covenant. And what God desires to do. And how that is yet even so much deeper than what God has done in our lives up to this point.

If we do not have that revelation, perhaps we're not going to thirst. If we're satisfied where we're at, if I think I'm a pretty good Christian, I'm not going to thirst.

But if I realize what God has bought me for. And what he desires to do. And I realize, I'm still far from that.

[22 : 18] But I realize God's not condemning me. He's saying, come. Come. Am I thirsty? Do you long for deeper communion with God?

Do you long for victory over the struggles of sin and self? Do you long to hear the Holy Spirit? Do you long for the reality of the presence of Jesus in a further way?

Is there a longing in your heart? The word of God says, if there is. If any man thirsts. Let him come. And then it says, he that believeth on me.

As the scripture has said, out of his belly. And that word belly just means innermost being. Shall flow rivers of living water. So just a question.

You don't have to raise your hand. But answer to yourself. Are rivers of living water flowing out of your life? And if they are.

[23 : 34] Can you say, yes they are. But I know there's much more. And if they aren't. If you can't say they are.

What's the answer? Try harder. Full surrender.

Jesus said. If any man believe. The old covenant. Was based on what man could do. God had his part.

Man had his part. We know it never worked. Man couldn't do his part. The new covenant. Isn't based on what man can do. It's based on what God can do.

In us. Through faith. We have one condition under the new covenant. It's belief. It's belief. It's belief. Now this word belief.

[24 : 41] We have a problem with our English language. So I'm going to try to clarify it. Does not mean believe here. Rivers of living water don't flow out of devils.

They believe in God. It doesn't mean. It doesn't mean believing God here. It means. Believing with a complete trust.

A complete reliance. A complete dependence. An absolute trust. To the point where I can put my life. Unreservedly. Into the hand of God. And in that light.

Absolute surrender. And faith. Is the same thing. But in our English language. In our modern. Day. Christianity. Somehow.

Faith means a different thing. But I want us to get a biblical definition of faith. Faith is an absolute trust and confidence in God. I don't profess to be there.

[25 : 43] But I've been really asking God to deal with me. In these things of self. Any self confidence I have. What can I do in the Christian life? What can I do?

What the word of God says? Nothing. Nothing is nothing. Jesus said I can in my own self do nothing. If Jesus said that.

Without sin. How much more. Me. So if I have any confidence. That I can do one thing. Outside of faith. Outside of God living in me.

Outside of his work in me. That limits God. That greatly hinders God. If I depend on myself. Any self dependence.

Which really is unbelief. Any self confidence. Which really is pride. Any self righteousness. Any dependence on me.

[26 : 46] I want us to get this. Really hinders. The power of God in my life. Because it's not faith. Any self confidence.

Self dependence. Self righteousness. Is the opposite of faith. It's actually trusting in me. What an affront to God. When we've fallen so far short. And if I could have an example here.

If I could have a one year old here. Just starting to walk. And I have a big guy here.

That's a bodybuilder. And I would say. Well I trust this one. This child here. To protect me.

More than this. This big guy. That would be a very crude illustration. But when I trust in anything of self.

[27 : 49] It's like that. There's no comparison. Between God's power and my power. Between God's righteousness and my righteousness. Between God's wisdom and my wisdom. No comparison.

And yet I trust myself. I'm speaking to myself. We do that many times. Don't we? How does that limit God? In your life? How does that limit God?

In the church? And when people look at us. Do they see me? Or do they see the glory of God? You know what they see? They see what I'm trusting in.

People that trust in their own righteousness. The world will look at you. And see self-righteousness. People that trust in their own. Whatever. Power. Self-dependence.

Structure. Whatever. They'll look at you. They'll see man. That's what they'll see. But if you're trusting in God. If your faith is in God. Your life will show it. And the world will look at you.

[28 : 48] And they'll see the glory of God in your life. It is a trust and a confidence in him. Again. That will commit myself completely to him.

We like to take things in our own hand. Right? We like to be in control. And some year. A few years back. My wife was trying to help someone.

And her life was quite chaotic. Very chaotic. And she just asked her. Are you willing to surrender everything to God? To give everything to God?

And she just looked at my wife and said. No. Because then I would be in control. And my wife just asked her.

Are you in control now? No. No. No. but we all do that, don't we? We just don't put it into words like that.

[29 : 51] It sounds a bit bad when it's put into words, but we all do that at times. So when I think it's better for me to be in control than to put everything to the hand of God, I'm really believing the devil's lie.

And we have limited God so much by not placing all into his hand. And it says in verse 39, But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. So very clearly here, these rivers of living water, he's speaking of the Holy Spirit. Now I like to liken these rivers of living water, or the river of God, to just Christ, the fullness of Jesus, who he is.

But in our lives, Christ is at the right hand of the Father. He's not here in person. But Jesus said, It's better for you that I go, than the Holy Spirit will come.

So the river is Christ, but it is the Holy Spirit that brings the reality, and the fullness of Jesus to each one of our lives. And how insulting to God, when I trust my own feeble hand.

[31 : 10] You see this little hand? How much can it hold? I thought of it, I won't do it, but I thought of bringing weights. Getting a volunteer, and seeing how much weight you could hold in one hand.

Not very much. Probably 20, 30 pounds holding like this would take it down. And yet we trust his hand?

We want control, we want to handle in our life? God's hand holds the universe. And yet we fail to trust him. As the song says, the hand that holds his universe, and yet it's small enough to mend one broken heart.

The estimation of the number of stars. Psalms 147. I just want to read a verse there. If you want to turn there, you can just listen. And that's not the only verse in the Bible that alludes to this.

Verse 4. He telleth the number of the stars. He calleth them all by their names. How long would it take you to name all the stars?

[32 : 38] A long time, because you couldn't come up with the names. The estimation of the number of stars in our universe is one septillion.

That's 24 zeros. It's more than the grains of sand on earth. In seconds, it would amount to about 31 quadrillion years.

So if you would name one star per second, it would take you 31 quadrillion years to name them all. That just shows how big our God is.

And yet he cares about you. And he knows the number of hairs on your head. I don't know that, but he does. He knows how many fell out this morning. So what could God do today if every one of us really believed?

Do you believe God? If rivers of living water are not flowing out of our innermost being, I conclude that we have to conclude that I don't really believe God.

[33 : 56] Because it was said earlier tonight, he doesn't lie, right? His word is true. He said, if you believe, if you trust me, what would it look like if the Holy Spirit was entirely and unceasingly in control in my life?

It would look like Christ, right? Because that's what he would write in my heart. It is in the potter's hand is where I really find the reality, the presence of Jesus.

And that song, Philip and Melody sang it last weekend at the youth meetings. But that song over the years has spoken to me many times. Many times in crossroads of my life, in difficult times of my life, that song has spoken to me.

And lately it's speaking to me a lot again. As clay to the potter, may I be to thee. I pray that a lot. As clay to the potter, may I be to thee. Do you believe you can form a better vessel?

of your life than God can? Again, when we put this into words, it sounds a bit stupid, right?

[35 : 17] But in our minds, sometimes we think that. By our actions, we say that. We don't fully trust. But in his hand, there I find the reality that he is my shepherd to feed me, to guide me, and to protect me.

That's where I find the reality that he is my light and my strength, my deliverer, my rock, and the love of my life. Again, what can the clay do? Can the clay do anything?

But if it will submit itself into the hand of the potter, the potter can take that clay and make it into a vessel. The clay can only consent to be in the potter's hand.

You and I have been given a choice. In the new covenant, God will do the work. He says he works in us both to will and to do. That's so beautiful. I often have the will, but not the power to do. But sometimes I don't even have the will. You know, if you don't have a hunger and a thirst, excuse me, you can ask God for a hunger and thirst. If you desire to have a desire that you don't have, you can ask God to give you that desire.

[36 : 49] That's a beautiful thing. God works in us to will, and then he works in us to do. What is our part then is just simply to surrender, to say yes, to consent.

When Jesus says, come, and I say yes. When Jesus says, go, and I say yes. When Jesus says, this doesn't honor me, and I say yes.

Really, in my life, if I trust him and simply say yes and walk that walk of faith and obedience, God says, I will do the rest.

I'll work in you to will and to do. I'll do the work in you that you have tried and tried and tried and struggled and struggled and failed over and over in your own strength to do.

I want to do it. If you would just say yes to me and place yourself into my hand. What are we saying when we do not trust God and cannot commit our life into his hand?

[37 : 50] Are we saying that God lies? Are we saying that God is unfaithful? And what does it really mean to God? What does it mean to God when I say no?

When I can't trust him? On the other hand, what does it mean to God when I trust him and say yes? Repentance is really, repentance is really just taking my life out of my hand and placing it into God's hand.

And that's an initial thing that takes place. That's what baptism represents in a sense. But it's then also an out. It's an ongoing thing. It's an outworking in my life.

Again, if any man thirsts, let him come to me. So, the question is, are we thirsty? Do I long for something more? A greater reality of God.

Life. His love. His burden for the lost. Full victory. Then hear Jesus say, come.

[38 : 59] Come. Come. If Jesus says, come, is there anything that can stop us? When Jesus said, come to Lazarus, he was a dead man.

Four days, stinking. Could Lazarus hear with these ears? He was dead. When Jesus said, come, the dead man came out.

That's the power of God's word. When God's word speaks, can you just say, yes, Lord. I believe. I don't understand how it's going to happen.

It looks impossible, but Lord, if you said it, I believe. That's the power of God's word. And so, if you're in a struggle today, turmoil, unbelief, sin, fear, confusion, or if you're just simply desiring a greater reality of God, can you hear him?

Come. Come to me. There's only one thing that can stop us. It's our own unbelief. The devil can't stop us. Jesus has all power, all authority.

[40 : 14] When he says, come, we can come. In the hand of the potter is perfect peace, freedom, and rest. Come. 2 Corinthians chapter 3, and we'll look at that a bit later in the week, Lord willing.

I just want to look at it very briefly now. Jesus said in Isaiah, Isaiah prophesied of Jesus. He said, I have given thee to be a covenant for the people. Speaking of Jesus.

God, this covenant that God desired to make with us and to bring us into, and I'll just say, it meant so much to God that God gave up his only begotten son to make a better covenant.

Under the old covenant, there was only so much that could be done. It did not disarm the devil. But under the new covenant, the word of God says, he has spoiled the principalities and powers of darkness.

He's disarmed them. He's stripped them of their power. We're not fighting for victory. We're fighting from the point of victory. That's past.

[41 : 34] God has given us the victory. Faith is the victory, and if we believe in the victory that God has already provided, it's a done deal.

And yes, in our own lives at times, we still fail. But Jesus secured the victory, and that's the power of the new covenant, the blood of Jesus. It speaks.

It's never lost its power. It fully heals and restores all that the devil had stolen in the Garden of Eden. And then the word of God.

And then the agent, the very person of Christ. He's given us Christ, who he is, his very begotten son, not just to die for us, but he's given him to us as a covenant.

And when Jesus is living in our hearts, God looks at us, he sees his son living in us. He doesn't see you in your past.

[42 : 37] He doesn't see you and me and our weakness and our failures. When our faith is in Jesus, and I know that I'm nothing, and I know that I need him, and I need him every day, and I trust in him, that's what God sees.

Remember I said, the world will see in our lives what we trust in. But God also sees that. And when my trust is Jesus, Jesus covers everything that used to be me.

that's the work of the cross. That's the beautiful exchange of the cross. And in that, in Christ, the enemy is completely defeated.

2 Corinthians 3, verses 3 to 5. For as much as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

And such trust have we through Christ the God word, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. Then verse 8, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

[43 : 52] He was speaking of the old covenant how it was glorious, but it was a fading glory. But he said, how much more? How shall not the ministration of the spirit, if the ministration of death, of the law was so glorious, how much more the ministration of the spirit?

I want to read that in the Amplified. Verse 8, why should not the dispensation of the spirit, the dispensation that we live in today, this spiritual ministry, whose task it is to cause men to obtain and be governed by the Holy Spirit, be attended with much greater and more splendid glory, the glory of the cross.

Jesus said to the disciples, when I ascend to my father, you wait, you wait at my footstool. When I ascend to the throne of my father, I'll pour out my promise upon you, the spirit of God.

And the disciples waited at the footstool of Jesus, so to speak, on the day of Pentecost. And Jesus ascended to the throne and he poured out the spirit.

And I want to say today, it still must be that way. Jesus must be on the throne and we must be at his footstool. Many people today, I'll just say, this health and wealth gospel, put self on the throne and Jesus at the footstool to be our servant.

[45 : 28] Doesn't work that way. There's nothing glorious in that. That's not where the spirit, that's not where the river will flow. That's not where the spirit of God is going to be at home. But the cross, again, I am on the throne and Jesus is on the cross or Jesus is on the throne and I am on the cross.

I am cursed. Self is cursed. Self is always under the curse of the law. And if I'm trying in my own strength, if I'm alive, it's miserable.

It's a miserable Christian life because it's a curse. But the cross, I can die to the curse. This self is cursed and I can be released and set free from the curse of self so that Jesus can live in me.

This ministry is to cause men to obtain and be governed by the spirit of God. And when we're governed by the spirit of God, when he's in control and self is not in control, the outcome will be the life of Christ.

And the life of Christ is rivers of living water. The Christ life, that's what it is. My own life is not that. When I'm in control, it's not that. But when the Holy Spirit is in control of my life and it's Jesus and the things that used to come up that frustrated me, now I can thank God, I can praise God, there's something, that's the difference.

[47 : 04] It's Christ. It's no longer I, but Christ. And it's life. And then 17 and 18. Now the Lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Liberty from what? Liberty from my weakness, liberty from my failures, liberty from my trying and my struggles. Where the spirit of God is in control, there is liberty from self.

But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. God says, if you place it in my hand, prove me.

If I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing till there's not room enough to contain it. You know, I think this is how it goes sometimes.

Sometimes we can experience that blessing in some areas of our life, but there's other areas we don't give to God. And we experience the curse rather than the blessing.

[48 : 13] So every area of my life, my thought life, my fears, my finances, my time, my health, my marriage, my family, we can go on and on and on.

Is it fully in his hand? Can he do with it what he wants? And again, God's blessing sometimes is not the same definition of our blessing.

I want to clarify that. It doesn't mean that we're not going to have problems. I think you know that. We're going to have, there's going to be trials.

There's going to be tribulations. Many are the afflictions of the righteous man. But the Lord delivers him. But it's that God will even make those things a blessing. May I use you as an example?

How did you say that? What was your testimony? I just want to mention something here. My daughter, Lalita, she has a chronic illness for three and a half years now. It's been a bit trying at times.

[49 : 44] I'll just say the enemy tried to take advantage of that. But he lost. Praise God. And what was your one test?

What was your one thing you mentioned to us? That you're praying more than you're praying for healing. You're praying that God's will can be done in your life. Is that how you said it?

If it takes this, how did you say it? You did say something about even through, I don't know how she worded it. But you know, what I'm saying is God's blessing and our blessing is not, how we define blessing is not always the same.

But if God can do a spiritual work in your life, if there can be eternal gain, it doesn't mean we're always going to have good health. But it does mean there can always be gain.

Spiritual gain from our health. There can always be spiritual gain from your finances, from your time, from your thought life, from your influence, from your marriage, from your family.

[50 : 46] God has provided a means that there can be eternal gain. That it can be a blessing after this life on earth is over. That there can be eternal fruit from each one of those things.

But it depends if we give it to God and let him use it and let him do with what he wants with it. If God can have his way, he'll make it fruitful. He'll make it a blessing. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord the Amplified says this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Again, it's God's doing. If we believe it's God's doing, we behold him, we look to him, we gaze upon him, we keep our eyes on him. I know what it is to get my eyes on the situation and I also know what it is to get my eyes on God.

I know what it is to have my eyes on the situation and get frustrated and be fearful and I know what it is to look to God and then hear him speak and say, I want to use that to do good work in your life and all of a sudden, it's life.

My focus has changed. My focus is different. I'm seeing something different. I'm not seeing it now through the natural eyes. I look to God. He spoke and now I see his glory in it.

[52 : 23] I see what he wants to do in it and I open my heart to that. It's the difference between self and Christ, between the curse and the blessing. I am not my own.

I have been bought. I'm his body. If his spirit is Lord, I take on his image, I take on his nature and I take on his character. So again, we're changed.

We're changed as we abide in the hand of the potter and the cross. I love that song we sang. Just appreciated those songs we sang. Out of myself into what he has.

Out of me into what he, it's a constant exchange. That's the Christian life but the cross, it's a constant exchange. And the problem with our Christianity today is we want everything that God has and we still want to keep everything that we have.

It doesn't work that way. If I, I light my cup of coffee in the morning but if there's a cup, if I grab my cup and it has tea in from the day before, I'm not going to put coffee in that cup.

[53 : 42] I'm not going to use it. I want an empty vessel so that I can enjoy my coffee. God needs an empty vessel if he's going to fill it with his glory.

We have to be willing to be emptied. And that's true individually and then it's true spiritually. I'll just say that when a clay vessel is broken, okay, there's a brokenness that God values.

I'm not talking about that right now. When we are in unity as a body, when we are that individually and then that collectively, we become a beautiful vessel together.

But if we're in disunity, it's like, it's like a piece of, a clay pot that's been broken. And you may still be able to find pieces that will hold a little bit of water.

You're not going to have rivers of living water. But how beautiful when there's unity and there's oneness and God can just fill that vessel with his glory, with life that can flow out.

[54 : 54] And so do you trust God? The hand that holds the universe. Is he worthy? Can he be trusted?

Is he good? A.W. Tozer says this, or said this, with the goodness of God, if I can get this, to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack?

You know what we lack? Faith. Faith. Trust. God would do a much better job of my life than I can ever do. No comparison.

Why is it so hard to trust? And yet, when we fail to trust, we rob God of the glory that is due his name.

We rob him of what he wants to do in our lives. It is our father's good pleasure to give unto his children the kingdom. It's his pleasure.

[56 : 10] It's his joy. It's his delight. And I think sometimes God, when we're going through a test and we pass the test, I imagine sometimes Jesus can hardly stay on his seat.

maybe he's not seated. Maybe he is standing. I don't know. But I want us to get that picture. God so loves us.

He longs to bless us. He longs to reveal himself to us. He longs to be near to us. He longs to come through in our trials. He's just looking for faith. And the minute that thief said on the cross, Lord, remember me when you come to your kingdom.

Jesus said today you'll be with me in paradise. Just that little faith. As soon as little faith rises up in our heart, God is there. He longs to be so near to us.

He longs because as those rivers of living water flow, it's really not even about us. It's about him.

He's the one that gets glory. He's the one that gets honor. That's why he gave his life so that he can live in us as his vessels.

[57 : 23] Will we trust him? I'll turn. I don't know who's closing, but let's just stand for prayer. Father, just forgive us for our mistrust, our unbelief, Lord.

Father, we just realize how patient you are, how merciful, how long-suffering. Father, may you just open our eyes. Lord, I can only in weakness speak your word, but Lord, it's only your Holy Spirit that can open our spiritual eyes.

May you just do that, Lord. Open our spiritual eyes to the heart of our Father. Your love, your wisdom, your goodness, your power, your holiness, Lord, your perfection.

what an awesome God we serve. You are perfect in all of your ways. You're beautiful beyond description. You're too, you're far beyond words, too marvelous for words.

We just worship you, Lord. We thank you for loving us. We thank you for forgiving us, for being so patient. Father, we confess we've robbed you so many times.

[58 : 43] We've dishonored you so many times. We've defrauded you so many times and yet you gave everything for us. Lord, may you just cleanse us from that. And Lord, help our unbelief.

May you just give us a faith and a trust in you, Lord. May the outcome of that be rivers of living water for the glory and honor of your name. Just take your word, Lord, and just speak it to each heart as the need of each heart requires for your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.