



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, I need the Holy Spirit to open my eyes and convince me that I've become righteous through the blood of Jesus Christ. I've read and heard this truth, and I know it intellectually, but I need a revelation of it in my heart. So Holy Spirit, go to work in my heart. Open the eyes and ears of my spirit to see and to hear that I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Free me from religious thinking that holds me in bondage to feelings of unworthiness. Please do it today, in Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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Crystal Lewis](#)

[For Such A Time As This-
Crystal Lewis](#)

[Beauty For Ashes-
Crystal Lewis](#)

[I Will Go-Crystal Lewis](#)

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 AND MOSES called all Israel, and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, that you may learn them and take heed and do them. 2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The Lord made this covenant not with our fathers, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4 The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mount out of the midst of the fire. 5 I stood between the Lord and you at that time to show you the word of the Lord, for you were afraid because of the fire and went not up into the mount. He said, 6 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 7 You shall have no other gods before Me or besides Me. 8 You shall not make for yourself [to worship] a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. 9 You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 And showing mercy and steadfast love to thousands and to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments. 11 You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in falsehood or without purpose. 12 Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, or your manservant or your maidservant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the stranger or sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. 15 And [earnestly] remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe and take heed to the Sabbath day. 16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you. 17 You shall not murder. 18 Neither shall you commit adultery. 19 Neither shall you act slyly or steal. 20 Neither shall you witness falsely against your neighbor. 21 Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife, nor desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's. 22 These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He spoke not again [added no more]. He wrote them on two tables of stone and gave them to me [Moses]. 23 And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders; 24 And you said, Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen that God speaks with man and man still lives. 25 Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go near [Moses] and hear all that the Lord our God will say. And speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it. 28 And the Lord heard your words when you spoke to me and the Lord said to me, I have heard the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have said well all that they have spoken. 29 Oh, that they had such a [mind and] heart in them always [reverently] to fear Me and keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children forever! 30 Go and say to them, Return to your tents. 31 But you [Moses], stand here by Me, and I will tell you all the commandments and the statutes and the precepts which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess. 32 Therefore you people shall be watchful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land which you shall possess.

Now to chapter 5.

AND Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the judgments, that you may learn them, and keep them, and do them (Deu 5:1). So these three things; you're to learn them, you're to do them and to keep them. The LORD made a covenant with you (Deu 5:2)

A conditional covenant. They're keeping His law; they're doing His commandments. The LORD talked with you face to face. (and I stood between the LORD and you at the time, to show you the word of the LORD: for you were afraid;) And God said, I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me (Deu 5:4-7). And now again the Ten Commandments are reiterated for us here in Deuteronomy. As they were given in Exodus. This is a repetition of the Ten Commandments. And he said, God wrote them in the two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, that when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain burned with fire,) that you came unto me, all of the heads of the tribes. And you said, Behold, the LORD God has shown his glory, his greatness, we heard his voice: but no man can talk with God and still live. Therefore, why should we die? and this fire consume us (Deu 5:22-25); And so they commanded Moses to go and listen to the voice of the Lord and come back and tell them, and whatever God said they promised that they would do.

Verse twenty-nine: O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever (Deu 5:29)! This is God's cry; this is God's lamentation. "Oh that the people would hear Me and obey Me that they might be able to enjoy My blessings forever." I'm sure that God laments over us. "Oh, if you would only follow me completely so that I can do for you all that I'm wanting to do." We so limit that which God wants to do because He loves you so much. He is wanting to do so much for you. Jude says, "Keep yourself in the love of God" (Jude 1:21). What does he mean? He means keep yourself in that place where God can demonstrate His love for you. God loves you so much. He wants to demonstrate that love but you got to be in harmony with Him. "Oh, that you would obey his voice. Oh, that you would be in harmony with the plan and purposes of God". "For the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). If your heart is really completely towards God, Oh, what he wants to do in your life. Things that God longs to do for you. And so God cries over the failure of the people, and thus, His inability to bless them the way He is desiring to bless them. (Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

Some mistakes just won't go away, Consider the error that tripped up the church at Galatia some 2,000 years ago. Somehow, it's still going strong today. Despite what Paul said about it, to this day a lot of teachers promote the idea that the Holy Spirit is received by the works of the law. How tragic it is that one of the greatest stumbling blocks to experiencing the fullness of God's blessing and power is a doctrine picked up in church! We hear that if we want the Holy Spirit to come into our lives, we had better clean up our act. We must get rid of every bit of impurity in order to be worthy of blessing.

Although such teaching is very sincere, it is sincerely wrong. The essence of such preaching is that we must be made righteous by our own conduct and efforts, and only then might God condescend to touch us. It was this same misguided teaching that kept me from receiving God's best for so many years.

Faithful but Frustrated

As a child growing up in a Pentecostal church, I earnestly desired what was termed the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I went to many "tarrying meetings" and quite often accompanied my father to the Saturday night men's prayer meetings. There I would wait upon the Lord and pray that God would fill my life with His power.

I dearly loved the Lord and I desired all of the power of God that I could possibly obtain. But something was getting in the way. For many years I thought some secret sin was holding me back. And it was - but not at all the kind of sin I imagined. My problem was not lust, or greed, or some all-consuming habit. My problem was self-righteousness.

You may think it strange that someone so young would struggle with spiritual pride, but I did. I memorized Scripture. I could recite the books of the Bible and spell them. I could quote entire chapters of God's Word. I never went to a show. I never smoked a cigarette. I never went to dances. The church I attended taught that all of these things were sinful, so I avoided them religiously.

Many times I saw the preacher's son pick up cigarette butts and smoke them, but I wouldn't do it. My other buddies in church might go to the matinee every Saturday, but I never would. I was going to be holy.

Then what was so terribly wrong? God was blessing my buddies, even when they were smoking cigarette butts! Lord, You know I am more righteous than they are, I thought. I've never done any of those evil things. Why bless them and not me? I had a terrible struggle.

It got worse when I heard people give testimonies of how they were waiting for the filling of the Holy Spirit. As they waited upon God, the Lord showed them the pack of cigarettes in their pocket. The moment they pulled out the cigarettes and laid them on the altar, God apparently filled them with the Holy Spirit.

I was trying to earn God's blessing, but I was never good enough. It never occurred to me to just ask God in simple faith.

Perhaps my problem was that I never had a pack of cigarettes in my pocket to be lain on the altar. So instead I would mentally list my sins from that week and think, Now Lord, I got mad at my brother this week. Lord, please forgive me for getting mad. Then I would wait for Him to fill me with the Spirit. But He didn't.

Countless times I heard speakers say, "You know God won't fill an unclean vessel. He is the Holy Spirit. Therefore you must be a holy vessel." So I would do my best to be holy. I confessed to God everything I could think of (and even some things that I never did, just in case).

I would rake over the coals of my conscience time and again. I committed and recommitted my life to God. I gave up every small, questionable activity I could find and sacrificed precious things I loved, all in a futile effort to become holy and righteous enough for God's Spirit to fill my life. I was frustrated and stifled in my walk with Christ.

Finally in desperation I said, 'All right Lord, I will go to China as a missionary. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit.' He didn't. I promised the Lord that I would go to China, Africa, South America, and India. Still He didn't.

All that time I was endeavoring to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit by works - by becoming righteous through keeping the standards I had set up. I was trying to receive the Spirit by the works of the law. I tried every trick I knew, earnestly hungering and desiring to be filled by God and to receive His gifts. I don't know how many nights I agonized before Him, wondering why He never blessed me.

I was convinced some righteous plateau had to be reached before God would bless me. I believed that the moment I could achieve that high plateau, the Holy Spirit would fill me. And yet I was troubled by what I saw happening around me. How could people come off of the street and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, stinking of booze and nicotine, and be baptized in the Holy Spirit right then and there? Yet they were.

It just wasn't fair. Here I had been walking with the Lord, serving Him all the way along, and they got blessed and I didn't. I couldn't understand the discrepancies of God. It was impossible for me to harmonize the teaching I had received with what I saw happening. If only I had understood God's grace! I would not have waited all those years to receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit. As I began to read and understand the Word of God, eventually I came to the text where Paul asks, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:2). Suddenly I realized this was a rhetorical question. The obvious answer was that they had received the Holy Spirit by the hearing of faith.

I was flabbergasted. I had never been taught such a thing. I had been trying on my own to become holy enough or righteous enough, but of course I never managed to become good enough to earn the filling of the Holy Spirit. It never occurred to me to ask in simple faith. I was sure God needed my help.

That day I put aside all my self-righteous efforts and simply said, "Lord, I am going to receive from you now the gift of your Holy Spirit." And I did, at that very moment. Stupid me! I thought. I could have had this years ago if only I had known. If only I had been taught!

Oh, what I lost in those lean years because of a teaching that emphasized obedience to rules and codes! We receive the indwelling, filling, and empowering of the Holy Spirit by trusting and believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, not by keeping some external code. That is why I repeat this simple yet powerful message over and over, emphasizing God's grace, love, mercy, and goodness to us undeserving sinners.

Blessings for the Taking

Once I began to understand the Word, I saw that it wasn't my righteousness or ability to reach some plateau of holiness that makes me worthy of God's blessing. God blesses me when I simply trust in Him for His blessings. The longer I live, the more I realize how undeserving and unworthy I am of God's touch. He wants to bless me not because I am good and holy and pure, but because that is His nature. He enjoys blessing His children.

Did you know there is only one thing holding back God's blessings from your life? They're not withheld because you haven't been faithful in your devotions this week. They're not kept back because you've failed in some area of your life. Everyone fails. The only thing holding back God's blessings in your life is your own refusal to trust Him for those blessings. The blessings of God are available to anyone who simply believes Him and trusts Him for those blessings.

Don't come to God on the basis of your own righteousness or goodness. You'd be a fool to want to rob the Lord of the good work He wants to do in your life! The only attitude acceptable to Him says, "I'm a failure and I don't deserve it - but please, Lord, go ahead and bless me anyway."

Once I realized that the blessings of God were mine through simple faith in Him, I came to experience His blessing ever since. I have been given so much and received so much from God that it is impossible to keep track of all the blessings. I have come to a door that is never closed. When I was coming in my own righteousness, the door was closed most of the time. But now that I come to God on the basis of His love, that door is never closed.

God always loves us. His love for us doesn't change from day to day. He doesn't love us more today than He loved us yesterday. God's love isn't like that. God's love for us is constant; it never varies. His love for us is not predicated upon us; it is predicated upon Him and His nature of love.

God is love. He loves you and keeps loving you even when you are a rank sinner. Even when you were rebelling against Him, shaking your fist in His face and saying, "I hate you, God!" He loved you then. And He loves you now. Because God loves us, He wants to bless us. His blessings are not dependent upon our goodness, our righteousness, or our faithfulness. The blessings of God depend solely upon His desire to bless us. Our part is simply to receive and believe Him for His blessings. Remember Paul's rhetorical question? "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Did you become so righteous that God finally decided, "Well, he is righteous enough now, so I guess I will have to fill him"? No! We are no more righteous now than the first day we believed.

You can't imagine the blessing and power that God is eager to impart to you if you will just believe and trust Him for it. We are so often like the foolish Galatians. Why would we be so foolish as to return to a legal relationship when we can relate to God in a love relationship? Don't be a fool and demand what you think you deserve, because you deserve death. All of us do, for all of us sin.

God wants to bless you now because He loves you. God wants to bless your life, and the avenue to that blessing is your faith.

You Can't Mean Me!

Some of you reading this may believe that God can't possibly bless you because you have failed Him too much or because you are too weak or because you have done something terribly wrong. Perhaps you have a chronic problem with a vile temper or a wandering eye. You wonder, How can God bless me when I yell at my kids? How can God bless me when I am so rotten? How can God bless me when I am this or that? Your problem is that you are looking for a blessing on the basis of your own performance. You are trapped in the kind of thinking that says, "When I become so good and so perfect, then He can bless me."

But that is so misguided!

We must get it into our heads that God wants to fill our lives with the Holy Spirit the moment we say, "Lord, I really desire to have this power and I ask You to fill me."

But I must warn you. It is undeniable that at precisely this point, spiritual warfare erupts. When you pray for God's filling, instantly Satan will begin to throw all kinds of lies and accusations into your mind. He will distract you. He will make you feel guilty or unworthy. "What are you doing, asking God for that?" he'll sneer. "You should be ashamed of yourself. You have no right! Look at what you are. Look what you have done. How could God possibly fill you with His Holy Spirit?" Ironically, many times Satan will use Christian people to deliver this lie. Any person on a self-righteous trip will inevitably heap blame on you. "It's your own fault, you know," he'll announce. "If only you had a little more faith. If only you were a little more spiritual. If only you were a little more like me." A little of such spiritual bombardment, and many of us decide to retract the whole thing. "Forget it, Lord," we say.

God wants you to experience His love, His touch, His power, and His anointing.

What a tragedy! I know I don't deserve the blessings of God, but God doesn't bless me because I deserve it. God blesses me on the basis of His love toward me and of His grace toward me in Christ Jesus. That is the basis of the blessing - not my goodness, not my righteousness, and not my perfection. If we could just get this through our tender skulls, we'd start being blessed like we can't imagine.

The blessings are there. God wants to bless you. All you have to do is simply believe Him to bless you, though you know full well you don't deserve it. The blessings don't come because of your works, they come because of your belief - because you trust and believe God will bless you.

Failure to grasp this truth is exactly why a lot of people have real problems in their Christian experience. "I don't know why God has blessed him he smokes cigars!" someone says. "Why, I don't do that. Yet look at all his blessings! I can't understand why God blesses people who smoke cigars." But of course, God's blessings are not predicated on smoking habits. They're only predicated upon our believing God to bless us because we are God's children.

God wants to bless His people today. The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him (see II Chronicles 16:9). Just turn your heart toward God, believe in His Word, and trust that He will do as He promises. Say, "Lord, bless me now." And receive it.

I know that such freewheeling grace is almost an affront to us. The moment I say, "Oh, Lord, lay a real blessing on me. I really want a fantastic blessing tonight," my mind objects: What do you mean, asking God for a blessing? With what you were thinking this afternoon, how can you ask God to bless you?

It is so hard for us to repudiate the idea of deserving a blessing. Simply to believe and expect God to bless us - though we have been failures and don't deserve it - is extremely difficult for us. But when we finally get over that barrier and come to expect God to bless us simply because He has promised to bless us, there is nothing that can stop His blessings from touching our lives.

The Blessings of Abraham

And what blessings they are! The same blessings which God promised to Abraham are ours because we are children of Abraham. Listen to just three of the promised blessings:

- "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1).
- "I will make thee exceeding fruitful" (Genesis 17:6).
- "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7).

All these blessings, and more, are yours. Because God sees you in Christ, the righteousness of Jesus is imparted to you. That and that alone is the basis upon which God blesses you, thoroughly and completely. The gospel of grace insists that even though you don't deserve it, God wants you to experience His love, His touch, His power, and His anointing. God has given to each person a measure of faith. Exercise it, use it, and it will develop. Just simply believe, trust in the Lord, and expect God to bless you.

Never forget that the blessing of God's Spirit in our lives is not granted to us because one day we became holy enough to deserve His blessing. It came to us when at last we saw the light and simply believed God to keep His Word. Our works of righteousness had nothing to do with it.

God's ways haven't changed a bit. The blessing of Abraham comes to us all through simple faith in our Lord Jesus. Our part is merely to believe Him for His blessings.

And, come to think of it - that's quite a blessing in itself.

("Why Grace Changes Everything"; Chuck Smith; Chapter 7: "Believing for the Blessings")

The Soul-Winner's Life and Work

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."—Prov. 11:30

Soul-Winning Explained

"He that winneth souls is wise."—Prov. 11:30

Soul-Saving our one Business

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—1 Cor. 9:22

Instruction in Soul-Winning

"And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."—Matt. 4:19

Encouragement to Soul-Winners

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—James 5:19-20.

"He that winneth souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30.

The text does not say, "He that winneth sovereigns is wise," though no doubt HE thinks himself wise, and perhaps, in a certain groveling sense, in these days of competition, he must be so; but such wisdom is of the earth, and ends with the earth; and there is another world where the currencies of Europe will not be accepted, nor their past possession be any sign of wealth or wisdom.

Solomon, in the text before us, awards no crown for wisdom to crafty statesmen, or even to the ablest of rulers; he issues no diplomas even to philosophers, poets, or men of wit; he crowns with laurel only those who win souls. He does not declare that he who preaches is necessarily wise; and alas! there are multitudes who preach, and gain much applause and eminence, who win no souls, and who shall find it go hard with them at the last, because in all probability they have run and the Master has never sent them. Solomon does not say that he who talks about winning souls is wise, since to lay down rules for others is a very simple thing, but to carry them out one's self is far more difficult. He who actually, really, and truly turns men from the error of their ways to God, and so is made the means of saving them from going down to hell, is a wise man; and that is true of him whatever his style of soul winning may be. He may be a Paul, deeply logical, profound in doctrine, able to command all candid judgments; and if he thus wins souls, he is wise. He may be an Apollos, grandly rhetorical, whose lofty genius soars into the very heaven of eloquence; and if he wins souls in that way, he is wise, but not otherwise. Or he may be a Cephas, rough and rugged, using uncouth metaphor and stern declamation; but, if he wins souls, he is no less wise than his polished brother or his argumentative friend, but not else. The great wisdom of soul winners, according to the text, is proven only by their actual success in really winning souls. To their own Master they are accountable for the ways in which they go to work, not to us. Do not let us be comparing and contrasting this minister and that. Who art thou that judgest another man's servants? Wisdom is justified in all her children. Only children wrangle about incidental methods: men look at sublime results. Do these workers of many sorts and divers manners win souls? Then they are wise; and you who criticise them, being yourselves unfruitful, cannot be wise, even though you affect to be their judges. God proclaims soul winners to be wise, dispute it who dare. This degree from the College of Heaven may surely stand them in good stead, let their fellow mortals say what they will of them. "He that winneth souls is wise," and this can be seen very clearly. He must be a wise man in even ordinary respects who can by grace achieve so divine a marvel. Great soul winners never have been fools. A man whom God qualifies to win souls could probably do anything else which providence might allot him. Take Martin Luther, for instance. Why, sirs, the man was not only fit to work a Reformation, but he could have ruled a nation or have commanded an army! Think of Whitefield, and remember that the thundering eloquence which stirred all England was not associated with a weak judgment, or an absence of brain power; the man was a master orator, and if he had addicted himself to commerce, would have taken a chief place amongst the merchants, or had he been a politician, amid admiring senates would have commanded the listening ear. He that winneth souls is usually a man who could have done anything else if God had called him to it. I know the Lord uses what means He wills, but He always uses means suitable to the end; and if you tell me that David slew Goliath with a sling, I answer it was the best weapon in the world to reach so tall a giant, and the very fittest weapon that David could have used, for he had been skilled in it from his youth up. There is always an adaptation in the instruments which God uses to produce the ordained result; and though the glory is not to them, nor the excellence in them, but all is to be ascribed to God, yet is there a fitness and preparedness which God seeth, even if we do not. It is assuredly true that soul winners are by no means idiots or simpletons, but such as God maketh wise for Himself, though vain glorious wise acres may dub them fools. This is to have many heavens, a heaven in every one won for Christ, according to the Master's promise, "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Charles Spurgeon

(AMP Bible; The Everyday Life Bible; Joyce Meyers; Scripture; Commentaries; Past Pastor Sermons; Dictionary; 2006; pg 274-276)
(Word 9 Bible Software; 2010; Concordance, Dictionary, Scripture, Sermons of Saints past, Devos; Sparkling Gems From The Greek)