



Open Water Ministries

~ 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, help me to never forget those early experiences I had with You after I first got saved. I'm so sorry I've allowed the complexities of life to steal my joy, and today I ask You to help me return to the simplicity of faith I once enjoyed. I admit I've been discouraged, but today I am deciding to get encouraged. Thank You for helping me to refocus and to remember that Your Word is unchanging and Your promises are true. Give me peace Lord. I ask my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Josh Garrels](#)

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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 WHEN BALAAM saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as he had done each time before [superstitiously] to meet with omens and signs in the natural world, but he set his face toward the wilderness or desert. 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes. And the Spirit of God came upon him 3 And he took up his [figurative] discourse and said: Balaam son of Beor, the man whose eye is opened [at last, to see clearly the purposes and will of God], 4 He [Balaam] who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes open and uncovered, he says: 5 How attractive and considerable are your tents, O Jacob, and your tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the riverside, as [rare spice] of lignaloes which the Lord has planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 [Israel] shall pour water out of his own buckets [have his own sources of rich blessing and plenty], and his offspring shall dwell by many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8 God brought [Israel] forth out of Egypt; [Israel] has strength like the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his enemies, crushing their bones and piercing them through with his arrows. 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion; and as a lioness, who shall rouse him? Blessed [of God] is he who blesses you [who prays for and contributes to your welfare] and cursed [of God] is he who curses you [who in word, thought, or deed would bring harm upon you]. 10 Then Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies, and, behold, you have done nothing but bless them these three times. 11 Therefore now go back where you belong and do it in a hurry! I had intended to promote you to great honor, but behold, the Lord has held you back from honor. 12 Balaam said to Balak, Did I not say to your messengers whom you sent to me, 13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the command of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own will, but what the Lord says, that will I speak? 14 And now, behold, I am going to my people; come, I will tell you what this people [Israel] will do to your people [Moab] in the latter days. 15 And he took up his [figurative] discourse, and said: Balaam son of Beor speaks, the man whose eye is opened speaks, 16 He speaks, who heard the words of God and knew the knowledge of the Most High, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes open and uncovered: 17 I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but He is not near. A star (Star) shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter (Scepter) shall rise out of Israel and shall crush all the corners of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth [Moab's sons of tumult]. 18 And Edom shall be [taken as] a possession, [Mount] Seir also shall be dispossessed, who were Israel's enemies, while Israel does valiantly. 19 Out of Jacob shall one (One) come having dominion and shall destroy the remnant from the city. 20 [Balaam] looked at Amalek and took up his [prophetic] utterance, and said: Amalek is the foremost of the [neighboring] nations, but in his latter end he shall come to destruction. 21 And he looked at the Kenites and took up his [prophetic] utterance, and said: Strong is your dwelling place, and you set your nest in the rock. 22 Nevertheless the Kenites shall be wasted. How long shall Asshur (Assyria) take you away captive? 23 And he took up his [prophetic] speech, and said: Alas, who shall live when God does this and establishes [Assyria]? 24 But ships shall come from Kittim [Cyprus and the greater part of the Mediterranean's east coast] and shall afflict Assyria and Eber [the Hebrews, certain Arabs, and descendants of Nahor], and he [the victor] also shall come to destruction. 25 And Balaam rose up, returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.

Numbers 22–25. Balaam

Balaam's prophecies were a remarkable prediction of Israel's influential place in history through a "Star" that would arise out of Jacob (24:17). Though God used him to speak true prophecy, Balaam, for money, was the instigator of Israel's shameful sin with Moabite and Midianite women, for which Balaam was slain and 24,000 Israelites perished (31:8 , 16 ; 25:9). And Balaam's name became a synonym for false teachers (2 Peter 2:15 ; Jude 11 ; Revelation 2:14).

(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 172)

Numbers 24

So when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he didn't even go up, as the other times before the LORD, [to seek the face or] to seek for enchantments, but he just set his face towards the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came alive (Num 24:1-2).

He saw the camp, the peoples abiding there, the tabernacle in the middle and the people around about it.

And Balaam the son of hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but my eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as the trees align aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as the cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted (Num 24:3-7).

Of course the king and kingdom looking ahead in prophecy to Jesus Christ.

God brought him forth out of Egypt; and he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn: and he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with the arrows. He couched, and he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: and who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and curses thee that curses thee. And the king's anger was kindled, and he clapped his hands together: and he said unto Balaam, Look I called you to curse my enemies, and you've altogether blessed them these three times. Now you better flee to your own place: Or I thought to promote thee to great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour (Num 24:8-11). I was gonna make you a great man but the Lord has kept you from that. You know, there is an honor that it is well that you be kept from; the rewards of unrighteousness. I was gonna promote you to great honor but the Lord—ah, that's the honor you don't want, I'll tell ya, the honor that the Lord holds back. And Balaam said to Balak, I told you... your messengers,

that if you would give me your whole house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, either to do good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD has said, I will speak? And now, I am going to my people: and I will advertise thee what the people shall do and the people in the latter days (Num 24:12-14).

So I'm gonna tell you one more thing. And so he prophesied once more concerning Jesus Christ. And it's a beautiful prophecy concerning the Lord, verse sixteen. He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, he saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, [or a kingdom] and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the child of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. And out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he shall perish for ever (Num 24:16-20).

Amalek is always, in the scripture, a type of the flesh. I don't have time to go into this tonight but when we get to the book of Esther we'll deal with Amalek, the type of the flesh. But this is God's word against the flesh. It's going to perish forever. The flesh life, going to perish forever. God's instructions to Saul concerning Amalek was what? "Wipe it out utterly." That is God's continual commandment concerning Amalek, concerning your flesh; wipe it out utterly. If you don't destroy it, it can destroy you. Paul said, "If we, by the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live"(Romans 8:13). The flesh life; we're not to give place to the flesh or to the flesh life but walk after the spirit and you'll not fulfill the desires of your flesh.

So, the parable against Amalek is a very important parable as God declares the end of the flesh life; "it shall utterly perish forever".

Then he looked on the Kenites, and took out the parable, and said, Strong is your dwellingplace, and you have put thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took the parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God is doing this! And the ship shall come from the coast of Chittim, shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and shall perish for ever. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way (Num 24:21-25).

And you think "Awe, goody, goody for you Balaam, good man." No, unfortunately. Balaam said, "I shall see but not know, I shall behold", but I do not believe that Balaam will share in the kingdom of God though he was a prophet of God indeed. But he allowed greed to master his heart. The king had offered all of these rewards, Balaam sought God that he might go and when God wouldn't curse them and the king said, "All right, that's too bad. You go home. I told you to curse them and you blessed them, you know, I was gonna give you great honor, I can't".

Now Balaam, greedy for the rewards that had been offered by the king began to give to the king evil counsel. And in the thirty-first chapter of Numbers we are told in verse sixteen, "Behold, these cause the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor" (Num 31:16). We'll get to that in the next chapter here, the thing that happened in Peor. But what happened, happened as the result of the advice that Balaam had given to king Balak because he was greedy for the rewards that the king was offering.

So in the book of Jude in the New Testament; the book of Jude we are commanded and the central message of the book of Jude is "keep yourself in the love of God." And we are given examples of three persons who failed to keep themselves in the love of God; Korah, Cain and Balaam. And of Balaam it said, "Because of his greed, his desire for the riches that the king was offering that they have gone the way of Balaam. It's referred to as the way of Balaam, who for reward for the greed that was there". The desire for the riches prostituted himself to the king. He was bought off.

In Revelation chapter two as the Lord deals with the church of Ephesus, no beg your pardon it must in chapter—it must be the church of Pergamos. God said to Pergamos that they had there "those who held to the doctrine of Balaam". At verse fourteen, I have chapter two, "A few things against thee because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication".

So the doctrine of Balaam: idolatry and spiritual fornication that Balaam set the king Balak up to do. Now it doesn't tell us right immediately in our text that this is what happened, but by looking at other scriptures now we understand the next chapter and what is brought out this next chapter. In second Peter chapter two and in verse fifteen Peter also makes mention of Balaam and he's talking about the false prophets. There'll be many of them. "False teachers who privately will bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord. And many will follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the truth is evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall with feigned words [or deceitful words] make merchandise of you" (2Peter 2:1-3):

Every religious system or every so-called prophet of God who seeks to make merchandise of you through deceitful words is a false prophet and you can tell them easily. They are using these deceitful words to get you to support them. And I believe in that every computerized letter sent out by these men is guilty of feigned words; "Dear Charles".

I have a friend that was here this week, an editor of Christianity Today and he said they get the same computerized letters that says, "Dear Mr. Today, I've been thinking about you this past week. Is every thing all right, Today? Now please go out and borrow twenty-five dollars and send it to me because I'm desperate." Those are feigned words and the purpose is to make merchandise of you. The Bible classifies them as false prophets. What is feigned words? It's saying something you don't really mean.

"Oh, all of you beautiful children, I love you". Yeah. You don't even know me, how can you love me? Feigned words, fair speeches, seeking to make merchandise out of people.

Now, among these false prophets Peter warns us that actually they are much like Balaam which, verse fifteen "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15). The guy loved the wealth. A false prophet, taking the monies and using it for his own enrichment, prostituting his ministry.

And so he advised the king this way, he said, "Look Balak, I can't go into a little spiritual trip and bring a curse. God won't allow me to do that. But these people, their strength lies in the fact that they worship one God and God honors them and God has taken them as his people. But the God that they worship is a very jealous God and if they start worshiping other gods, then His wrath will come upon them and he'll destroy them. Now here's what you got to do. Take a lot of the beautiful young girls that are here and send them down and let them flirt with the young guys. And let them entice the young fellows into acts of fornication and when they get them all involved in these kinds of acts then let the girls bring out their little gods and say, "Look these are the gods that we worship. You want to see how we worship these gods." And their gods were worshipped in sex acts.

Many of the pagan religious systems, the actual sex act was a part of the worship of the goddess of Venus and Aphrodite and some of these other pagan gods. And in the sex act itself were spiritual rights of these religions. "So, let us show you how we worship our gods." And so the king followed the advice of the prophet and that brings us into chapter twenty-five.

(Through The Bible C-2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries)

HOW MANY ARE WITHIN THE ranks of the Christian church by confession of faith—yet living daily as spiritual paupers and beggars, as though Christ Jesus had never been raised from the dead? I long for every believer in the church of our Lord to join me in a clear-cut manifesto to our times. I want it to be a declaration of our intentions to restore Christ to the place that is rightfully His in our personal lives, in our family situations and in the fellowship of the churches that bear His name. Too many within the Christian church seem able to do no better than to be concerned—and then to be apologetic. Let me say that the time for apologies is long past! The need today is for men and women of faith and courage and daring. The need is for Christians who are so concerned for the presence of Jesus Christ in their midst that they will demonstrate the standards of godliness and biblical holiness as a rebuke to this wicked and perverse generation. The church, generally speaking, is afflicted with a dread, lingering illness that shows itself daily in the apathy and spiritual paralysis of its members. How can it be otherwise when twentieth-century Christians refuse to acknowledge the sharp moral antithesis that God Himself has set between the church, as the body of Christ, and this present world with its own human systems? The differences between the churchly world and the followers of the Lamb are so basic that they can never be reconciled and they can never be negotiated. God never promised His believing people that they would become a popular majority in this earthly scene. But the inspired writer to the suffering Hebrew Christians in the first century promised something better. He emphasized the availability of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, in the life of the true Body, His church: You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. ... But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.... You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Heb 12:18, Heb 12:22-25)

The blessings are here and now: These warm, glowing New Testament words speak of God's great plan for Christ's life to be exhibited constantly in the faithful and believing church. They speak of great treasures and glorious realities that we should presently be enjoying in our Christian life and walk. The Hebrews writer says plainly that if we are a New Testament church, we have come to the joys of Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. He says we are surrounded by an innumerable company of angels. He reminds us, without any hesitation, that by our faith we are already included in the general assembly and church of the Firstborn. He states that our names are written in heaven. He does not hold back: he tells us that we are perfectly related to the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect! Because there are no limitations known to our God, the writer presses on to assure us of the reality of our fellowship with Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and of His blood, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel that cried out for revenge. These are all reasons why we should take our stand, put ourselves on record. This revelation of what God expects of the New Testament church makes me fall down before the Lord. I find myself crying in faith and determination: "Jesus, I will trust You and follow You in this present evil age. I will trust You to be my very life and sufficiency in the fellowship and joy of the body of believers, Your church!" Repeat: this is a present reality. Let me hasten to the Spirit's emphasis here to Christian believers. The inspired Word of God insists that the reality and the blessings from the heart of the living Christ are not reserved for some future and heavenly age. We are forced to part company with a great segment of popular Christian theology which congenially offers us soothing advice: "Let's not get mixed up or sidetracked. All of these precious things are references to heaven. So we will just bide our time, and we will have it all—some day!" Actually, there is no mention at all of a future heaven in these promises to the church. There is no reference to the day we will die. Rather, the New Testament church of Jesus Christ is to know and possess these realities now. We can meet God and His Spirit in blessed reality now! We can know and commune with our Lord Jesus Christ in our heart of hearts now! We may know the joy of sensing all around us God's innumerable company and the fellowship with the church of the First born now! As committed Christians, we know what we believe and we know what God has done for us. We want to make it plain to our own day and age that we are highly privileged to be part of a Christian church in God's plan and in God's will. We are thankful for the dimensions of His grace and love. We know where we stand in faith, and we are not bound by ecclesiastical traditions, except where we choose to be and intelligently and openly desire to be. Because we experience the life of Jesus Christ in the body, we need not be engaged in finding out what other religious groups are doing. Our statement of faith is clear: through the Holy Spirit we get our instructions from the throne of God as we study and lean upon His revelation in the Scriptures.

We desire to make it very plain that we have a valid reason for our assemblies and fellowship. It is a reason of spiritual life and spiritual maturity. It is not a social reason—even though our Christian fellowship does have social implications.

The negatives must be dealt with: Let me remind you that the writer to the Hebrew Christians began this section with a negative reference: "You have not come to {Sinai}," and then he proceeds to the positive declaration, "You have come to Mount Zion." It is fitting that we consider the negative before dealing with the positive. How can anyone deny that a portion of our Christian teaching has always taken into account the negative concerns? When we stand up for Jesus, it means that there are some things that we will be against. This is the way it is in this world. We do not deny it, and we do not apologize for it. To say that we will never discuss anything in the negative would be similar to saying that there is only one side of a coin. If I should try to split all of my Canadian quarters right through the middle because I am impressed with the likeness of the Queen but I want to get rid of the likeness of the elk on the other side, someone might soon appear at 5 Old Orchard Road to deal with me. "A nice old man," they would comment condescendingly, "but he has slipped his trolley." There is polarity in the universe, and we do well to recognize it. In order for right to be established and grow, wrong must be exterminated, or at least minimized. Of these words, exterminate or minimize, I prefer exterminate. I like to see the extinction of things that are wrong and unworthy. We are always going to have to deal with the negatives—the things that are offensive and out of place—in order that we may emphasize the things that are right and that have a rightful place. I am reminded that when Jesus came to offer Himself to Israel, there was much that He was forced to oppose. Much of His teaching was against the negatives in the religious professions of the Pharisees. He found it necessary to expose the negative concepts they held and to oppose their distorted and unworthy views of God's love and mercy. It is surely just a pipe dream to imagine that a man with a head full of error and a heart full of heresy can receive truth into his mind and being. When Martin Luther came into his effective ministry, he had to personally engage the power of Rome, and he dared to stand against it. The plain-speaking evangelist, Charles Finney, had to meet and defeat the dead Christian orthodoxy of his day in order to release the power of God's Word for the salvation of men and women.

The Christians of our own day who still think they can be "carried to the skies on flow'ry beds of ease" are wrong, terribly wrong! We must face up to what is going on in the churches and meet it as men and women of God. It is not enough just to show a smiling countenance and insist that we are hoping for the best. Where we see there is wrong, we must face up to it, show why it is wrong and dismiss it; and then plant truth in its place. A builder dares not erect any structure until he has cleared the sand and debris away in order to place the foundation squarely down on rock.

Some things we must oppose: As Christian believers, we must stand together against some things. So, if you hear anyone saying that A. W. Tozer preaches a good deal that is negative, just smile and agree. "That is because he preaches the Bible!" Here are some of the things we oppose: We are against the many modern idols that have been allowed to creep into the churches. We are against the "unauthorized fire" that is being offered on the altars of the Lord. We are against the modern gods that are being adopted in our sanctuaries. We are specifically against the baptized foolery and sanctified frivolity that have come to the fore, even in conservative Christian churches. We hold firmly to our belief that the Christian church is a divinely appointed body and that as a church we are called to worship and witness for Christ. We believe in another dimension also: that we are called to an attitude of separation from the things of this world that grieve the heart of God. We are against this world's ways and its false values. We are against this world's follies and its vain pleasures. We are against this world's greed and sinful ambitions. We are against this world's vices and its carnal habits. We believe this spells out clearly the Bible truth of separation. God asks us to stand boldly against anything or anyone who hurts or hinders this New Testament body of Christians. We dare to state that an apathetic tolerance is not necessarily a virtue. It may be a downright vice if it is given to excusing hurtful abuses. Actually, the body of Christ has been given deposits of love and faith that bring self-healing and self-building. But if the church tolerates within itself those things that harm and destroy, it will not heal itself—it will wither! Therefore, it is necessary for us to stand with and teach the Bible and all its truths. The Word of God is the "antibiotic" that seeks out and destroys the viruses that would plague the life of the church.

Now, to the positive side!... But there is a positive side. We do need to rejoice in the positive blessings that come to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. His positive will is our glory! It is a positive reality that we do not have to wait for that day when Christ is fully revealed to know the everlasting joys and possess the everlasting treasures that have come to us through His death, resurrection and glorification. The apostle Paul does not advise us to wait until we get to heaven. In his Letter to the Ephesians, he encourages us to claim our spiritual inheritance and heavenly blessings now: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ... He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ {that is here and now}... to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves {that is also here and now}... In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace {that, too, is now}. ... And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ. ... (Eph 1:3-9) Paul then races on into the future to show us that all of our gracious blessings which we now have in Christ constitute only the prelude for all of the ages to come. It is a remarkable listing of the shining glories to which we, as members of the body of Christ, are called in our pilgrimage here. Note that I am speaking of the "body of Christ, not what is frequently referred to as the institutional Christian church. It can be fairly said that the institutional church is largely known in the world as an organization and not as a living organism. The institutional church offers many good things to its members, but it does not necessarily recognize the true glory of Christ's life within. It lives and thrives on sociability, amusements, group activities—things that may be innocent and pleasant and nice but which lack the glories of the church of the living God.

That wondrous delight which the disciples felt when they met with their risen Lord is not there. There is no delight, no adoration, no worship except what is superimposed by the beauty of the stained glass windows and the solemnity of organ tones.

It is paramount that the church of Jesus Christ should be concerned for the supreme gifts of God. The church should be concerned for those spiritual blessings that have been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ and made accessible to us now through the ministries of the eternal Spirit of God.

But we are citizens of heaven: The church of Jesus Christ, His believing body on earth, recognizes that "our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phi 3:20). The believing Christian agrees that he or she is a migrant and a pilgrim. To these believers, God has imparted His own nature. They have a distinct sense of belonging to one another while they live—almost as exiles—in an unfriendly world. These earthly citizens of heaven speak a common language—that of their constitution, which is the Bible, the Word of God. They love to sing the songs of Zion, for they are loyal to the same Lord and King. Thus the Christians come together where the life of the assembly is the life of Christ. This is the Bible pattern. God the Father is there. Christ the Son is present. The Holy Spirit indwells each member. The life and spirit of Christ is the true glory of the church. Let us not overlook the fact that the "inner man" is a real being as certainly as the eternal, physical "man" is a real being. For certain the soul within us has ears and can hear the voice of God. The spirit within us can experience and taste the glories of God in a blessed fellowship now. Such is the joyful purpose of the church! I dare to remind you, as a fellow-believer, that God has set before us a rich table of blessings. He is saying, "This is all yours, and it is for you now!" God tells us that we share in fellowship with all of those who are enjoying His blessings in the heavenlies. He is saying, "Share these blessings! They are all yours. And Christ, your elder Brother, is in the midst, presiding over My table!" The reality of our spiritual blessings in Christ can never be apprehended by a downright secular philosophy. The deaf person will never acknowledge the satisfying impact of a symphony orchestra. He or she cannot hear. The ailing man on a starvation diet cannot describe the taste and delight of good, nutritional food. He is on his death course. So, the person who is dead in trespasses and sins but brags of culture and education and refinement can only shrug and walk away when we try to describe the glory of God, the beauty of Jesus, the wonder of the Holy Spirit and the present accessibility of Zion, city of God. But when that person shrugs and walks away, we still have our smile and our joy. We know what we have found: the "spirits of righteous men made perfect."

Are we falling short of the goal?...Are we so absorbed with worldly affairs that we do not enjoy God's promised blessings as we should—right now? Why are we not trusting God to let us inspire one another as we sense the presence of these good, invisible gifts? They are the things that are ours in Christ now because we are part of the body of Christ. Oh, for the spiritual insight and godly trust of an Elisha! Remember that Elisha, the prophet in a day long past, lived so close to God that he was able to tell Israel what their great foe, Aram, was doing. The king of Aram inquired of his forces if there was a spy in the ranks. His own people gave him this answer: "Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom" (2Ki 6:12). So the king "sent horses and chariots and a strong force" to surround Dothan, Elisha's city. The next morning, Elisha's young assistant came rushing in, pale-faced and trembling, to report the military build-up. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" he cried. But the old prophet just bowed his shaggy head in reverent prayer: "Lord, open his eyes so he may see." And God answered the prophet's prayer. God opened the young man's eyes and let him see the true situation. God showed him the presence of the heavenly host between the city and the enemy forces. The young man "saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." As the enemy troops advanced, Elisha prayed again. "Strike these people with blindness." God did so, and Elisha himself led the confused and blinded troops to Samaria and to Israel's king. The story ends as well as any in the whole Old Testament. When the king asked Elisha if he should kill the Aramean prisoners, Elisha intervened. "Do not kill them. Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." And that is just what they did. The Bible record concludes with great significance: "So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory" (2Ki 6:23).

Our conclusion

Here, then, is the conclusion of our manifesto of faith: If those who call themselves the people of God would give up their carnality and worldly-mindedness, if they would live with the reality that Jesus is victor at the heavenly controls, they could be the kind of New Testament church that makes glad the heart of God. There would be such an overflow of the Holy Spirit's gifts and graces that their spirituality would be effective in every contact and activity, just as it was in New Testament times. God grant that it may be so!

A.W. Tozer: Jesus, Author of Our Faith: AND OTHER ESSAYS ON FAITH; COMPILED AND EDITED BY GERALD B. SMITH; Aiden Wilson Tozer (April 21, 1897 - May 12, 1963)

(AMP Bible; The Everyday Life Bible; Joyce Meyers; Scripture; Commentaries; Past Pastor Sermons; Dictionary; 2006; pg 250-252) (Word 9 Bible Software; 2010; Concordance, Dictionary, Scripture, Sermons of Saints past, Devos; Sparkling Gems From The Greek)

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