

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

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HOLY BOLDNESS

by Phil Enlow

Adapted from a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle in May of 2018.

Last week we focused on Colossians 2 and 3 and the title of the message was, "All and in All." It focused on Christ and the fact that what we have is not religion but a person. The answer to everything is not merely what we do and how we do it; rather, it's a person.

This week my mind went back to a scripture in that passage. There's a point that I feel is critical. During the week I came face to face with a need in my own life and immediately thought of a verse in Colossians, chapter 2.

In verse 6 we read, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

The one point that I have often made based on this verse is that the principle by which we are to live the Christian life is the same as that by which we are saved in the first place. It's not two different things.

Whether we are just coming to God, or continuing to live for Him in this world, there is this overriding sense that I need something I don't have, and that the answer is in Christ. Everything I need is provided in Him.

Language is a funny thing. There are probably no two languages where there is a word in one language that has an exact equivalent in the other language. There is a range of meaning within a given culture for a certain word, but when you take it over to another culture and language, often the translation doesn't quite capture the whole meaning. This is particularly true when you try to translate the Greek spoken 2000 years ago into modern American English.

The word that jumped out at me from this verse is the word, "received." In English, the word "received" has a mostly passive meaning. For example, if I "receive" a package, I might sign for it, but there's not a lot of real action on my part. Someone else acts to hand me the package and I merely "accept" it.

There's a lot of so-called Gospel preached today that's like that. It's so simplistic that I just 'accept' it, I just receive it and that's about all there is to it.

Of course, we certainly don't want to go in "the other ditch" and suggest that we must somehow work for or earn salvation. It is, indeed, a gift. And yet, there is effort involved! What do we mean?

Hebrews 4 expresses it well. Verse 10 refers to entering God's rest, that is, a work that is finished, complete. How well that describes what we have in Christ! We cannot add to what He has done. Verse 10 also refers to us as "resting" from our work. Salvation is not about working hard to convince God to accept us! The basis of our confidence toward God must be fully transferred from anything we can do to resting in what He has already perfectly done.

And yet, verse 11 begins, "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest" That sounds like a contradiction, but it isn't! The effort involved is not to overcome reluctance on God's part or to somehow earn salvation, but rather it is an effort to overcome the resistance that comes from our sinful nature as well as from the devil.

That is why we need grace, God's help, in order to come to that point of surrender where we lay hold of His promise. We do not possess that ability in ourselves. And this principle applies not only to the beginning of our spiritual lives, but also to our walk as believers.

Thus, there is an action part in our relationship with God that we can easily overlook. Often, we can get in a place where, mentally, we

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Through Paths of Dryness and Desertion

Author Unknown

It is very common for us, when we feel the sweetness of the grace of God, to fancy that we love Him. But it is only in the withdrawals of His Presence that our love can be tried and the measure of it known.

There are many, who when they experience meltings of heart, shedding of tears, and other sensible delights, imagine that they are favorites of the Almighty and that they truly possess Him, and so pass all their lives seeking after those pleasurable sensations.

But they should be cautioned lest they deceive themselves; for these self-admirings hinder them from discerning the true light or making one step towards perfection.

No sooner shall we have given ourselves up to serve the Lord than He will begin to purify us and try our faith, in order to draw us nearer to Himself.

And, for this purpose, He will lead us through the paths of dryness and desertion; so that, when we endeavor to fix our minds in silence, in order to feel after our God, we will not experience the comfort and refreshment we expected; but, on the contrary, will be more than usually beset with a multitude of troublesome imaginations.

Insomuch, that we shall begin to think that we labor to no purpose, and that prayer is an attainment to which we need not aspire, seeing that our imagination is so ungovernable, and our minds so void of good. But this state of dryness is very profitable, if it be suffered with patience.

The Lord makes use of the veil of dryness, to the end we may not know what He is working in us, and so may be humble; because, if we felt, and

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Editor: Phil Enlow

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings once again in the wonderful name of Jesus! Well, fall is supposed to be here but we are still waiting for cooler weather! In His time.

This issue's lead article is once again adapted from a message used on a recent tv broadcast. It is one we all need in this dark hour, specially me! How timidly we often approach the things of God as though the things He has promised somehow depend upon us: our performance, our worthiness, our ability, etc. God is truly looking for those who will take Him at His word. Jesus paid an incredible price to give us the very riches of God.

We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ! How strange it would be if we were to inherit an earthly fortune yet be afraid to draw upon it. The devil has so many ways of trying to blind and discourage us from claiming that which God has given us in Christ. May we stop listening to his lies and boldly claim, and fight for as needed, that which is ours.

As I thought about this issue my mind went back to an old article entitled, "Through Paths of Dryness and Desertion." I probably thought of it because of how I, myself, was feeling. It's very easy for us to attempt to gauge our spiritual standing with God based on how we feel and upon our circumstances at any given time. That is a prescription for an very up-and-down spiritual life!

The simple fact is that we are called to walk by faith, and not by sight. If God let us "see" and "feel" all the time we would never grow up spiritually. And so, we all experience times of dryness when God seems far away. This is totally normal and no cause for dismay.

Of course, He is always right there, yet in His infinite wisdom, He sometimes withdraws that "sense" of His presence. It is then that we must lay fast hold of His Word, realizing that His Word is the real truth and that earthly feelings and circumstances are fleeting illusions.

Then, I thought of the short article about the butterfly. What a wonderful picture of God's plan for us to "fight" to possess that which He has given us. As Paul told Timothy, "Fight the good fight of the faith; Take hold of

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believe in all that Christ has provided, yet we do not benefit as we should, and so we get stuck in certain areas of our lives. I won't ask for a show of hands of how many people are in that place where you're sort of stuck. You know there are things that Christ has provided, but somehow, you're not enjoying them.

I certainly would have to raise my hand, because the Christian life is a journey. We have not arrived. And we face issues throughout our journey in which we need the change that we were singing about this morning. The Lord is changing us, isn't He? Thank God, He is! Thank God, He will continue His work in us until that day. And the end of it is a certainty for everyone that has genuinely given their heart to Him.

But here is an interesting thing: if you were to trace that Greek word through the New Testament, most of the time it is not translated, "receive," but rather, "take." Now that's quite a difference, isn't it? If I just "receive" something, that's one thing, but if I "take" it that implies more of an action on my part.

And that's what I felt was lacking in my own experience. There was an area where I wasn't "taking." Christ was offering. It was available, it was there, but I wasn't really, aggressively taking. And I believe we need to better understand that balance.

Thank God for everything He has done! He has provided everything we need. And not only did He provide it, He also came seeking us. He came convicting us so that we would come to a heart-level belief, a conviction that we need Him and that He's the answer, because that's the only foundation for approaching Him and coming to Him. There's nothing in us that would ever do that. So, it's God Who first acts in mercy towards us. But there is a point at which He looks for a response!

There are some that so emphasize the sovereignty of God, that it's almost like we have little to no real responsibility. God either chooses us or He doesn't, and we have no real

the eternal life to which you were called"
1 Tim. 6:12.

The other short article, "Your All in All," was shared in a recent service. I know it will bless the Lord's people.

Once again we had our Youth Camp in South Carolina over the Labor Day Weekend. We rejoice over the opportunity and trust that many seeds were sown that will have eternal results. It is a challenging time to grow up but Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through Him!

Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

say in the matter. Others so emphasize the will of man that it's like God is a salesman, or even a beggar, trying to convince us to "accept" a better plan for our lives.

Well, the truth is that God is sovereign! He is in charge! The question is not *whether* He's sovereign, the question is, *how* does He use that sovereignty? He uses it to appeal to men, to convict them, to bring them to a point of real surrender. But it's more than just an acquiescence, where we just say, "Okay, I give in." We have things to overcome in the process. And we need strength that comes from Him alone in order to do that.

I thought of several scriptures and I want to go through them and try to balance this truth out, or at least enlarge upon it, to show what the meaning of that word really is. "Receive," again, is more than just a passive thing.

How about Matthew, chapter 11? Although it doesn't use the exact same Greek word that Paul uses in Colossians 2, nevertheless, we find here a wonderful expression of the balance between God's part and man's part.

Matthew, chapter 11, is a passage in which Jesus was asked about John the Baptist, the forerunner who came announcing His coming. And He made this very interesting statement in verse 12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

Well now, one thing that we mentioned last week is certainly contained in that, and that's the fact that what God is doing in the world is a divine invasion. That could easily have been the title of the message. There is an invasion by God that is forceful and mighty and it's invading the Devil's territory to rescue people for His eternal kingdom! As Paul said in Col. 1:13, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves."

But that's not the whole of it, is it? Jesus said, "... forceful men lay hold of it." There is opposition anytime you and I seek to move toward the Kingdom of God. I know you know that, if you know the Lord at all. You know that this doesn't come without opposition.

And the question is, what do we do about it? Do we just say, "Oh, it must not be for me," or a thousand-and-one reactions that would cause us to stop short of what God has provided? This scripture makes it clear that He is looking for some serious effort. I'm very glad that is not *self-effort*, but there is an effort involved! There is an absolute reaching forth where our will is geared up and there is a kind of insistence about it!

One picture that often comes back to my mind is one I've mentioned before and it's from Pilgrim's Progress. You may remember that early in the journey in which Christian was headed for the Celestial City, he came to

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the House of the Interpreter. And the purpose of that was to learn important spiritual truth, and this was prior to his encounter with the cross, where he finally got rid of the terrible burden he had been carrying.

While there he learned several important lessons. One of the things that the interpreter showed him was a beautiful castle. Everyone in that castle was happy and rejoicing, and it looked like a wonderful place to be.

But outside of that castle there were a number of very strong soldiers who stood there with swords, determined to oppose anyone who would try to enter. There was also a group of men who acted as if they wanted to enter, but they looked at the opposition and were afraid. So, they backed off and did not try.

And then Christian saw one man go up to a table where a man was writing down the names of those who wanted to enter. He gave him his name, put on his armor and started for the castle with great determination, one man against all that opposition. He then valiantly fought his way through and was received into the castle with great joy.

Folks, that's a better picture of salvation than a lot that's preached! I'll tell you, if anyone gets saved, it's going to be in spite of a lot of opposition from within and without. The old nature is an enemy to God and will never willingly yield. There are many things that will stop you from entering the Kingdom of God if you let them. You're going to have to, with God's help, push through those things.

Those entering the kingdom do not passively say, "Lord, please slip a ticket to heaven in my back pocket and I'll go on and try to live a better life." This is an all or nothing kind of thing.

It does not truly dawn upon most people what is really at stake: they are either going to live forever with Him or they are going to be destroyed. The price of salvation is their life! Did not Jesus say, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it"? Matt. 16:24-25.

Anyone seeking to enter the kingdom will have the Devil whispering in their ear a thousand-and-one things that will cause them to say, "Wait a minute, what about this, what about that?" And they are going to have to be willing to push through all that. And so, just coming to Christ is not some overly simple, "Okay, God, I'll go along with you," or an, "I'll try it out and see how I like it," kind of thing. God is looking for people who are deadly serious.

Remember the parable of the sower. Good seed was sown on four different kinds of soil, representing different kinds of hearts among

those who hear God's Word. The first kind of soil was trampled down and very hard and the seed could not grow. Demons had no difficulty removing the seed from such hearts.

But there were two other categories of people upon whose hearts the seed of the Word of God fell with at least some apparent result. In one of them, the soil was shallow. That surely describes a lot of the American church today. "Forgiveness of sins, being a friend of God, getting to go to Heaven one day: that sounds great! Sign me up! I'm willing to go to church and take up a religious lifestyle. Who doesn't want a deal like that?"

But what happens? The problem is that underneath the soil is rocky! There are issues in the heart that have never been touched, never been confronted. Self is still on the throne! The principle of sin still rules, and it just takes the right circumstances for them to say, "Wait a minute, I didn't sign up for this."

I've said many times, when persecution comes to this country, how many people will still identify with Christ? It's going to change a lot, isn't it? That's what's happening in many parts of India, right now, for example. They're undergoing a very particular persecution and it's growing, but we can stand with our brothers and sisters there.

But, you know, it's having good fruit. God always advances His kingdom in the face of whatever the Devil does to oppose. We're asleep here! We don't know what's going on. If you have any awareness at all, you can see the forces of darkness gathering, and all it will take will be the right set of circumstances and things are going to change dramatically!

But God is getting His people ready. He doesn't want us to fear. But he does want us to be aware that being part of His kingdom involves battles that must be fought. He gives the victory, but He gives it to those who, in faith, are willing to fight.

In Jesus' parable of the sower there was a third type. They received the seed and it even started to grow a little, but then the cares of this world took over. They were basically more interested in this world. The true priority of their life was what they could get out of this world, their life in it, all the issues connected with it. The Kingdom of God was not the center!

Folks, for God's people, His kingdom is the center! It is what life is about. And we're going to have a fight on our hands if we enter this kingdom. But the glorious thing is that when we fight, when we agree and say, "Yes, Lord, I want this with all of my heart," we're going to find out that God will come and help us. We're going to find out it's not up to our strength at all. God comes on the scene!

That's what grace is about. It's by grace that we are saved! God has to help us. But when our wills align with His truth, with His provision and His purpose, and we set our hearts

to do what He says, He will come on the scene and we will find that we're not alone. That's real salvation. That's the principle by which people come in. A determined heart, powered by God's grace, is a greater force than all the powers of darkness arrayed against it!

I thought about another scripture that is closely connected with this, and it's in Luke 13. In verse 22, we find Jesus going from village to village, "... teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?'" Well, Jesus didn't directly answer it, but indirectly He did. He said, "... make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to."

How do you put that together with just "accepting" Jesus in a basically passive way? Now, I'm glad that there are times when people may describe it that way, and yet it is genuine. Thank God for every time it is! But oh, the truth is so much deeper than that. Jesus here is describing people who seemingly want to enter the kingdom. They see the Kingdom of God, to some degree, and they're trying to enter it and they want to enter it, but **they're not able to**.

Why in the world would that be? Is God trying to keep them out? Does anyone here think that God is just trying to block the door and saying, "No, you can't come in. I don't care how hard you try, you're not getting in"? No! Of course not!

What's the issue? The issue is that there's something they're not willing to let go! At some point, there is a choice that has to be made regarding the Kingdom of God and something in one's life.

I'm sure everyone by now has thought of the rich, young ruler, the classic example. Here was a young man who was zealous about serving God based on everything he knew, which was the Jews' religion and the Law of Moses, and he had kept it from the time he was a boy. He was serious about it. Luke 18:18-23.

And so, to paraphrase, he said to Jesus, "I've done all the things that you've talked about. What else do I lack?" And Jesus said, "Sell what you have, give it to the poor and come and take up your cross and follow Me." Now, that's not a specific command to everyone, but in his case riches were the god of his life, weren't they? That was the issue. The door to the kingdom was too narrow for him to bring in his love for wealth.

God's not against people having money if He has their hearts. God saves all kinds of people. Thank God! But for this man, wealth was his god. And when Jesus put it that way, when it was made plain that he had to choose between the Kingdom of God and his wealth, he went away sadly, didn't he? So, this is a good example of someone who wanted to

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enter but wasn't able.

Folks, God's going to put His finger on issues in every single life! And I say that to ones growing up here. God is going to put His finger on the issues of your life. It may be some ambition. It may be the desire for a mate. It could be any one of many things that your life and your affections get fixed on. But I'll tell you, if you come to Christ, those things are going to be laid on the altar. He is going to be Lord of all, or not Lord at all!

But do you see the balance in the scriptures between coming to a place of surrender, which sounds very passive, and yet fighting very real battles to lay hold of what God has provided? Those who enter His Kingdom desire it with all their hearts, more than their next breath. That's what is truly involved in entering the Kingdom.

But I find, in my own life, and I don't think I'm alone in this, that there are many times when I'll come up against a need, and I know, theologically and scripturally, what the answer is. I wouldn't dare say, "God, you didn't prepare me for this. You didn't provide for this. There's no real answer. I'm just stuck being who I am. That's all there is to it. I'm stuck." That would be like saying, "God, it's all your fault."

How many think that's the case? We all know it isn't. Either God has provided everything we need in Christ or He hasn't. So, if He has provided everything and we're not walking in it, where is the issue? Is it with God?

It's with us, isn't it? God is looking for people who are "on board" with Him, completely, looking to Him and trusting Him, not only knowing that they have a need, but being bold in their approach to God about that need.

And that was the kind of reaction I had about something. I said, "Wait a minute! You know, I'm sitting here being a victim. I'm sitting here putting up with something when God has already told me what the answer is. I need to get up on my 'hind legs' as it were and say, 'wait a minute! I insist upon obtaining what Christ has provided for me! It belongs to me!'"

God is looking for greater boldness and assertiveness in His people, to lay hold of what He has already paid such a high price to give us! That's the heart of the burden that I felt this morning. And I see God saying, "I've done everything for you and here you sit." God help us to come to the place where we have that boldness!

We've got a God who values boldness. He values that kind of heart that says, "I will not accept anything less!" I just pray that God will get through our thick skulls what He wants from us today! Did Jesus not tell us about the widow and the unjust judge in Luke 18? Her bold persistence obtained justice in spite of a corrupt judge. In verse 7, Jesus applies the

lesson: "And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?"

He doesn't want us to leave today and say, "Oh, that was wonderful truth! Praise God!" and then go back to our lives as they are and not be changed by it. God wants to change me! He wants to change you! But you and I have a part to play. Are we going to seek Him? Are we going to believe Him?

Are we going to actually stand on the promises, or, as my dad used to say, just sit on the premises? Sadly, that's what a lot of Christians do. Instead of "standing on the promises," they're "sitting on the premises," sleeping, when the Lord has done so much. He's given everything for us! Praise God! We rightly worship Him! He alone is worthy of our worship!

One of the scriptures that came back to me is in Genesis 32. This passage recounts a key event in the life of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. Remember, Jacob was one of the patriarchs and he was a real character! He did a lot of things his own way and yet the Lord worked in spite of it. How many are glad the Lord works in spite of us?

Yes! He reaches us when we're in a condition of great need and begins to mold our hearts and our minds, dealing with all kinds of issues in our lives. Jacob was someone who believed in the covenant God had made with Abraham and his heirs. He valued the covenant and he valued the birthright that would enable him to step into the benefits of that covenant relationship with God.

His older brother, Esau, didn't care! One day he got really hungry and he traded his birthright for a bowl of beans! And so, he despised that birthright.

So, in spite of the fact that Jacob schemed and cheated him out of it, what you see in him is a heart that said, "I want that! That matters to me." And God began to mold that heart and meet with him. He had to flee from his brother and go live in another country for a number of years. While there he wound up getting married and acquiring flocks and herds, before starting back.

In the process, God revealed Himself to him in greater and greater ways and said, "Don't be afraid, I'm with you." But now he was coming back to meet Esau. And he remembered how it was when they parted. Esau was trying to kill him. And then he heard that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Whoa! And he reacted just as you and I would.

So, he did everything he could think of. He separated his family into two groups and sent gifts ahead, whatever he could naturally think of to try to pacify his brother's anger towards him. And then he was left alone, wasn't he?

In verse 24 we read, "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could

not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.'"

"But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'" Think of the boldness! Think of the brassy response, "I will not let you go! I've got to have a blessing from you!" That was a response driven by a deep sense of need!

But here is a man who is essentially talking to God! I don't know if this was a pre-incarnation appearance of Christ or an angel, but whoever it was, Jacob was dealing with more than just a man. And yet he had the gall, if you want to put it that way, to say, "I will not let you go...."

How many of you think that God wants us to have that kind of a boldness with Him? Here's the thing: **God wasn't offended by this.** This is actually what He was looking for, a cry from the heart that said, "I must have You! If I don't have You, my situation is hopeless! I want You above all else, God! I need You!" And so, there was a holy boldness to say, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And God blessed him!

Isn't there a lesson in that? There's a boldness that you and I need to have with God. Oh, how timidly we approach Him. "Oh, pretty please, God. Pretty please, help me with this." And then, if we don't have feelings within a certain amount of time we think, "Oh well, I guess I'm not one of the ones. I guess it's not for me. Oh, poor me." There are so many ways we get turned aside and stop short.

I tell you, the obstacle is not God. God is going to allow all kinds of things to come our way. In this case, it was fear. But whatever it is, God is looking for people who have that kind of spirit. And He doesn't despise that.

That's what He's looking for from you and from me today, a heart that not only says, "Thank God for this grand, wonderful, perfect provision for salvation. Thank God for it. But I will not rest until I possess it."

Don't look at me that way! Am I telling you the truth? Is this truth, or are we just not sure about it? How does God really see me? Who am I to talk to God like that? I tell you, God's not the problem. God is looking for people who are willing to say, "I am boldly claiming what is mine based on your promises." Remember, God had repeatedly confirmed His covenant with Jacob and also had told him to return to Canaan. So, Jacob was on solid ground in his boldness.

I don't come to God because I deserve anything. That issue is gone. God has freely shown mercy to me, an unworthy sinner, because of all that His Son accomplished on the cross. I am an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. Rom. 8:17.

Nor am I just trying to command God to come and serve me, fulfilling my earthly

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wants and wishes. I come wanting to be His, wanting to enter into what He has provided, unwilling to stop short or be turned aside.

I tell you, God loves that kind of person. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart." Jer. 29:13. There are times when God allows challenging circumstances. He may allow time to pass. He will allow the devil to talk to us. Our nature will rise up and say, "No, you can't have this. I will not let go."

That's the time when we need to learn how to take a stand in our spirits and say, "I will not quit. I will not back down from what I am asking, because there it is in the Word of God. God has said it's mine. It's my inheritance. I will not simply walk away from it and say, 'Oh, well. This is good enough.'"

I'm not going to ask how many people have done that. I'd have to be the first one to raise my hand. God has given us so much. I know there are people here who have done what I'm talking about. You backed down. You got excited about something, and you were going to claim it, claim the promise and stand on it. Then, your excitement and confidence kind of fizzled out over the next few days, and you were right back where you started.

But I know that there are people here who have taken a stand in your spirit, and you kept standing. You kept standing, and you kept standing, and God answered, didn't He? That's what God is looking for.

If we're going to grow as a people, if we're going to experience what we sing about, we're going to have to embrace real changes in our hearts and lives. This is the pathway. God's done His part.

I realize we can't tackle it all at once. Thank God! But we sang this morning about God leading us on a pathway, leading us through this life. Thank God, He does! But a journey is a step by step thing.

In our journey He's going to lead us to places of battle. He's going to lead us to places where we're going to have to take a stand in our hearts and say, "Wait a minute. I know what the issues are here. I know where I stand because of what Jesus has done. That's my hope. It's not in me. And I will not be deterred from laying hold of what He has provided for me whether it comes easy or it comes hard." Thank God!

Sometimes, He gives us things that are very smooth and very easy. Other times, there is a pitched battle that must be fought. But oh, what we gain in that victory and how faith grows and becomes stronger. That's what God is looking to build in every single one of us.

I tell you, the church throughout its history has lived at a marginal level of life in terms of laying hold of the provisions of God. I believe,

in this last hour, God is going to bring His people to a higher place, don't you?

I had to argue with the Lord. I said, "Who am I to preach this? I need this more than they do." But someone's got to stand up here and speak the truth. And I'm trusting it's not just me. I'm trusting that God is in this. His heart is toward you right now. He cares about your life. He cares about the issues that bother you, that hold you captive. He cares about every little thing, and He's promised to lead you.

But oh, we need to recognize that when He leads us to a mountain, He doesn't mean for us to throw up our hands and stay where we are, but rather to challenge it and say, "Wait a minute. Who art thou, O great mountain?" Remember the prophecy in Zechariah 4 that before Zerubbabel the mountain would become a plain?

We have the right, not because we are anything, nor because we can do anything in ourselves. But we have the right to stand upon the promises of God and expect to see them fulfilled in our lives. The more we will learn to live like that, the more we're going to experience what Jesus died to give us.

We've got to go back to this basic principle. It's the only way to become a Christian to begin with. Those coming to Christ have to stand against whatever obstacles arise from the prospect of laying down their lives, turning from sin and trusting in Him as their Savior. And we're also going to have to do the same thing the rest of the way home. But I'll tell you, we have a God that's going to be with us in every single battle. Praise God!

There are so many places in the scriptures where you see that kind of a spirit. God told Abraham in Genesis 15 to make a sacrifice, and he did all the prescribed stuff, but then time went by. What happened? Birds came because of all the fresh meat lying there. What did he do? Did he say, "Oh, well. God didn't mean what He said. I'm just going to have to go back to the way things were"? No, he beat off the birds, didn't he? And, at just the right time, the Lord came.

How many of you have had to "beat off the birds" to get some place spiritual? Birds are going to come. The question is, what do we do when they come? Do we have that sense in us that it is a spiritual battle? It is a battle in which I am seeking to serve God, knowing that He is greater than everything, but that I am going to have to fight my way through.

Of course, the picture of the Israelites is one we've used so many times. They had the promise of the land. It was theirs. Not only did they hear about it, but when the spies went over to explore it, they brought back a bunch of grapes so big, it took two men to carry it.

So, now they were in a position of being able to taste and see, yes, this is exactly what God said it was, a land flowing with milk and

honey. Caleb was one of the spies and he said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." Num. 13:30.

Well, on what ground could he say such a bold thing? After all, there were giants among the inhabitants of the land. Did he have hope because Israel's army was greater, more experienced? Were the Israelites smarter? No! There was only one answer: God had promised to give it to them.

Sadly, the rest of the nation threw up their hands in fear at the report of the giants, and, in their minds, the giants trumped God. Well, how many giants are there in our lives, that, for all practical purposes, trump God and His promises?

I don't want to say that to condemn. I believe God desires that we wake up, think right and be encouraged. God doesn't condemn His people, but He sure does know how to admonish, encourage, and point us in the right direction.

Many of you will remember something Brother Thomas used to say often about faith. He said, "Faith starts where it's at with what it has, and it starts where it's not with what it doesn't have. It just starts."

So, wherever any one of us is today, this is all God is looking for. We could think about this and say, "Oh, my God. I should be down the road, and I just can't even imagine getting there." Well, let's just start here. Where are you? What's the pressing issue? What is the thing you're facing right now?

Sometimes for me, it's the "want to" that I need help with. But I tell you, we have a God who can help our "want to." He knows how to bring us up against a recurring need until we cry out and say, "Oh, God, this cannot go on. And I'm sick and tired of giving in and, in effect, blaming You."

Isn't that what we're really doing? If we're making any kind of excuse for ourselves, what we're saying is, "God, You just haven't given me enough. It's Your fault." It's not His fault. He holds out His hand, and He says, "You step out in faith, and I'll be with you."

When the Israelites finally entered the land, the strategy was different for every city, every town. But every time the Israelites stood upon the promise of God and went against the giants, God backed them up, and they won a complete victory. Every time they backed down in fear, and didn't believe God, they were defeated.

Many of the tribes wound up with heathen people living among them and they became a snare. You know that happens in our lives? This, the heart, is the territory God wants me to conquer. This is the land, not a piece of geography. This is the land that needs conquering. God wants to replace me with Jesus to live in here and to help me to be the kind of a person that He wants me to be.

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Holy Boldness

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I have no hope of that happening unless He has mercy upon me. I need Him every day. His provision is there. What is my attitude when I come up against a need? Do I just throw up my hands and say, "Here I go again. I've been here before. It's hopeless"?

We need to say, "Oh, God, You have provided the answer, and His name is Jesus. And I am not going to back down. I am not going to let go until You help me in this area."

We have a God who values boldness. And, again, this is not me trying to order God around. This is me coming to Him because He has the answer to my need. I know it is mine because of His Word and His promises, and I am not backing down. I'm not leaving without it. And if it takes six months of praying, I'm going to stand.

How many times are we told that in the scriptures? Having done all, "give up," right? No! Having done all, "stand." We're going to meet the devil who comes like a roaring lion. Stand against him. God will help every one of us. Take hold of this side of the truth. Eph. 6:10-17.

What a perfect example we have in Philipians 2:12-13, one of my favorite scriptures, where he says to, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." There is an effort that we put forth, but we put forth that effort in the understanding that it is God who works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

So, when my will and my heart are aligned with God to do what He wants, to seek what He desires, and I step out in that faith, am I on my own? Does He send me into the battle and say, "Well, good luck"? No! He immediately comes on the scene, and there is an inflow of divine help and divine life. That's the Christian life.

I am confident that there are areas where you and I need to start getting bold. We need to start saying, "God, I will not let You go unless You bless me. You have promised this in Your Word, and I'm sick and tired of just sitting here, singing about it, but not experiencing it.

We sing that wonderful song, "He is All I Need." But, what about the second verse? "I will take Him now, I will take Him now, for all that I need." That sounds pretty positive to me, doesn't it to you? This is about engaging our wills to obtain what God has promised. That is the kind of exercise of will that God loves. That's what He's looking for from me, from every one of us.

God's not just going to dump His blessings on people who don't care, or on people who hang back in fear and unbelief. He is going to let obstacles to faith arise so we can overcome them, and in overcoming them, we become what He wants us to be, and His life flows.

God is looking for His people to have a holy boldness. Anyone here need that? Do you really think God just wants us to kind of muddle along, and everything will be taken care of someday, somehow, some way?

God has given us everything in Christ. But there is a part that we play in laying hold of that and actually possessing it. And many times, we're waiting on God and He is waiting on us.

We need learn to go to God with that kind of holy boldness and say, "Lord, this is what You said. I will not let You go until You bless me and help me in this area. I'm going to stand here, and I'm not going to back down because I don't get the answer, or I don't have a feeling in five minutes. I'm going to stand, and I'm going to put my faith and my hope and my trust in Your promise.

"And I believe with all my heart that that's my only hope. I'm all in, Lord. I need grace. Every part of my being is in on this one. I just need You," and He will continue this work in

every single one of us. There's more territory for us to take, folks.

It's not God's fault. On the other hand, I don't want to get condemned and think, oh, I should be way down the road. No, I need to be here, putting one foot in front of another, doing what Paul said, pressing toward the mark, forgetting what's behind. Thank God we can do that. But, "reaching forth to what is before," is the life to which God has called us.

And I tell you, we can press forward in confidence, can't we? Do you think Paul went to the Lord and said, "Well, pretty please, Lord? Won't you take pity on me? I'm so poor, and I try so hard"? Or did he rather say, "God, I know what Your will is, and the devil and my flesh are fighting against it, but I will not yield to them. I am laying hold of what You have promised me"?

There will be opposition. That's why Paul used the word, "press," but we have a God who will honor holy boldness. Praise God!

Paths of Dryness

Continued from Page 1

knew, what He was working in our souls, satisfaction and presumption would get in.

We should imagine we were doing some good thing; and this self-complacency would prevent our spiritual advancement.

True Prayer Consists In Enduring And Persevering

And, though in prayer we may feel ourselves to be in a dry and comfortless state, not being able to get rid of our troublesome thoughts, nor experience any light, consolation, or spiritual feeling, yet let us not be afflicted, nor desist from our undertaking; but resign ourselves at that time with vigor, and patiently persevere as in His presence; for while we persevere in that manner, our souls will be internally improved.

We must be aware that nature is always an enemy to the Holy Spirit, and that when she is deprived of sensible pleasures, she remains weak, melancholy, and full of irksomeness. Gal. 5:16-17.

Remember, that "...they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

This kind of prayer may be well typified by that wrestling, which the Scriptures say the patriarch Jacob had all night with God, until the day broke, and He blessed him. Genesis 32:1-28.

Wherefore, the soul is to persevere, and wrestle with the difficulties that it will meet with in prayer, without desisting, until the Sun of internal light begins to appear, and the Lord gives it His blessing.

Required To Be Humbled

If you go to prayer with the spirit and intention of praying, so long as you retract not that intention, although, through misery and frailty, your thoughts may wander, you will, nevertheless, pray in spirit and in truth.

Almighty Power, in due time, will help you to overcome all your difficulties; and when least you think, will give you holy purposes, and more effectual desires of serving Him. Distrust not Him, therefore, but only yourself.

Remember that, as the apostle saith, "He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." II Cor. 1:3. His comforts are sometimes withdrawn, but His mercy endureth forever. He hath deprived you of what was sweet and sensible in His grace, because you required to be humbled.

Perseverance, Faith, Patience

Be of good courage then, and though it may seem to you that you toil without gaining much advantage, yet you must recollect we must plough and sow before we can reap.

If you persevere in faith and patience, you will reap an abundant reward for all your labors. Would you be so unreasonable as to expect to find without seeking; or for it to be opened to you, without your taking the pains to knock?

As well might the husbandman expect to see fields waving with grain, without his having been at the trouble to put the seed into the ground.

It is no hard matter to adhere to God while you are in the enjoyment of His comforts and consolations; but if you would prove your fidelity to Him, you must be willing to follow Him through the paths of dryness and desertion.

The truth of a friend is not known while he is receiving favors and benefits from us; but

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Paths of Dryness

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if he remain faithful to us when we treat him with coldness and neglect, it will be a proof of the sincerity of his attachment.

Though Almighty Goodness hath no other love and we seek Him, yet He frequently conceals Himself from us, that we may be roused from sloth, and induced to seek him with more fidelity and more love!

But, with what abundant goodness doth He recompense our faithfulness! And how sweetly are these apparent withdrawals of Himself succeeded by the consolations of His love!

David saith, "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God..." Psalms 40:1-3.

In one case God left Hezekiah, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. II Chron. 32:31.

The Lord led the Israelites forty years in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep His commandments, or no. Deut. 8:2-3, 16-18.

Be sure your heart is right with God, and with everybody. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalms 66:18.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:25-26.

The Butterfly

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it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 Jn. 3:2-3).

"For our light affliction, is but for a moment, and works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" (2 Cor. 4:17).

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" Matt. 13:43.

"Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. 21:9-11).

BOOK CORNER

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl's deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan's kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$6.50.

Does God Speak To You? by C. Parker Thomas

This booklet is composed of a wonderful series of articles published in the Midnight Cry Messenger during 1979. In this time of great spiritual darkness and deception what are the various ways in which He speaks and how can we learn to recognize His voice and respond? Suggested Price - \$3.50.

Examine Yourselves, By Phil Enlow

Paul said to "examine yourselves." There must be a way to do that. Can you say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Tim 1:12. Suggested Price - \$7.50

The Gospel, By Phil Enlow

What is the gospel? Everyone thinks they know--but do they? In this day of watered-down "easy-believism" it is critical to know what real salvation is. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Suggested Price - \$3.00

How Do You Know You Are Right? By Phil Enlow

A spiritual challenge. A study of spiritual knowledge and how it is acquired. This is an area of critical importance in this hour of spiritual darkness and deception. We cannot afford to blindly rest in tradition. Suggested Price - \$4.00

Immortality, By Phil Enlow

What does the Bible teach about immortality, the future of unbelievers, the future of God's people? From the eight-part series in the MCM. Suggested Price - \$5.00.

The Keys of the Kingdom, by C. Parker Thomas

A clear study of the keys as they apply to us in today's world. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

Light in This Present Darkness, by Phil Enlow

From the series in MCM. Message for God's Remnant in the earth regarding the present hour of darkness. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Lying Signs and Wonders, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of articles concerning the end of the age exposing much deception as well as giving forth important truth needed by those who would be prepared for Christ's soon return. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Midnight Cry, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains two articles that set forth the truths concerning the midnight cry: what is it? who hears it? who makes it? what is its significance for us. A must for people who would understand this ministry. Suggested Price - \$1.00

Sex and Marriage in the Light of God's Word, by C. Parker Thomas

From a series of articles covering a whole range of scriptural and practical truth designed to help God's people in this important area. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Sudden Death Overtime, by Phil Enlow

From the series published beginning in 2001. A look at our world and its prospects through biblical "glasses." What can we learn from history? What lies in our future? Why is the world like it is? Things every Christian should know. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

Tongues: My Testimony, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains the article by the same name as well as an article entitled "Tongues Should be Tested" by Gerald McGraw in which he recounts lessons learned from testing to discover the spirit enabling someone to speak in tongues. Startling! Suggested price - \$3.00

What About Genesis? by Phil Enlow

How should we understand the Genesis accounts of the creation and the flood? Can a simple historical understanding of these accounts be defended in this age of scientific skepticism? Does it matter? Suggested Price - \$4.00.

What Does Deception Look Like? by Phil Enlow

Recognizing spiritual deception at the end of the age. What are its characteristics? Satan is waging all-out war and his chief weapon is the lie. As never before believers need to be grounded in bedrock truth. Suggested Price - \$9.95.

Your Adversary, By C. Parker Thomas

Awhile back, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. Suggested Price - \$2.50.

Note: The prices listed above are suggested with the thought in mind of simply covering the costs of printing and mailing these materials. It is not our intention to become "book-sellers," selling books for profit. Our desire is to get out truth that can help set God's people free in this critical hour. Please write to us at:

Midnight Cry Messenger

P.O. Box 685

Southern Pines, NC 28388 USA

Your All in All

by Anita Jones

Make ready for battle! Arm yourself with My Word. Take up the shield of faith. Prepare your feet with the good news of peace. How beautiful are the feet of them who bring good news!

Come to the water, all who are thirsty! Drink from the well that never runs dry. Eat from the table of the King in the presence of your enemies. Enjoy the richest of fare! Do not be satisfied with the usual, the natural. Hunger for the supernatural, the heavenly manna.

The Word is very near you; it is even in your heart and in your mouth! Declare it! Make it known to your family; speak the Word of God with boldness and great conviction. Do not be afraid! If you truly believe I AM then trust me to be your ALL!

Your All in All: you be All in for Me and I will be All you need:

When you fear – I will be your comfort;

When you question – I will be your Answer;
 When you rest – I will be your Peace;
 When you seek – I will be your Treasure;
 When you speak – I will fill your mouth;
 When you cry – I will hold your tears;
 When you ask – I will answer;
 When you petition me – I will listen.

Ask me! And I will show you great and mighty things that you know not.

Seek me! And you will find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.

Knock at My door! I will open doors for you that no man can shut! I will close the doors where you do not need to go. For I love you and I have a good and perfect plan for you! I long to bless you and make your way prosperous! I will go before you and make your paths straight. You will walk in My truth and delight in My ways!

I will keep your falling. I will make you blameless before your accusers. I will set you upon a rock and lift your head above your enemies who surround you. You will sacrifice with shouts of praise! You will sing and make music to Me, the Lord, Your God!

I Am your All in All!

The Butterfly

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further. So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us.

We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly!

I asked for Strength...And God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for Wisdom...And God gave me Problems to solve.

I asked for Prosperity...And God gave me Brain and Brawn to work.

I asked for Courage...And God gave me Danger to overcome.

I asked for Love...And God gave me Troubled people to help.

I asked for Favours...And God gave me Opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted...I received everything I needed!

"Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial happening among you for your testing, as if a surprise were occurring to you; but according as you share the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that you may rejoice exultingly at the revelation of His glory" (1 Pet. 4:12, 13).

"For whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and chastens every son whom He receives. If you endure discipline, God is dealing with you as with sons . . ." (Heb. 12:5-7, 11).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and

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Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

Monday - Friday

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
WEMM	107.9 FM	Huntington, WV	11:00 AM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

Local Broadcasts

Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32
Sun. 7:30 AM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62
Sun. 7:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGS TV-16
Sun. 7:00 PM

Jacksonville, FL - WTLV - Ch. 12 HD
Sun. 6:00 AM

Los Angeles, CA - KDOC-TV 56
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Milwaukee, WI - WMLW-TV 49
Sunday, 7:00 A.M.

Minneapolis, MN - WUCW-TV CW23
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Monroe, LA - KMCT-TV 39
Sunday, 7:30 A.M.

Palatka, Florida - WJGV-CD 48
Sunday, 6:30 A.M. and Monday, 3:30 A.M.

Phoenix, AZ - KASW-TV CW6
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Pittsburgh, PA - WPGH-TV FOX
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

San Francisco, Oakland, California
KBCW TV-44 - Sunday, 6:00 A.M.

Short Wave Radio

WHRI ANGEL 1

Australia/New Zealand
Mon.-Fri.: 0900 UTC - 12.015 Mhz
East/Central Africa
Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC - 17.815 Mhz
Caribbean/Central & South America
Mon.-Fri.: 2300 UTC - 7.315 Mhz

WHRI ANGEL 2

East North America
Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC - 5.920 Mhz
Mon.-Fri.: 2000 UTC - 11.750 Mhz

KWHR ANGEL 3

China - Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC - 9.930 Mhz
Mon.-Fri.: 1715 UTC - 9.930 Mhz

Bonus Airings on Webstreaming

Angel 2 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 2000-2015
Angel 3 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 1715-1730

For a current schedule of "Angel" stations go to leseas.com/whr/program-schedules/, scroll down to "Detailed Schedule Search," enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click "Start Search."

TV Network Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

The NRB Network (DirectTV 378)

Sunday - 6:30 AM Eastern
Monday - 3:30 AM Eastern

VTN - Little Rock Arkansas

Online or Cable
Sunday - 1:30 PM Central

SacFaith TV - Sacramento, CA

Monday - 8:00 AM Pacific Time
Tuesday - 8:30 PM Pacific Time

Watch Online or on Cable Channels
Comcast 20 / AT&T 14 / Consolidated 19

Please pray "...that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel..." **Ephesians 6:19.**