

Transformed by Receiving the Spirit of Revelation, Part 3

INTRODUCTION

I want to continue on Ephesians 1. This is the third message in which we're looking at this prayer. It's a very important and significant prayer; it has line upon line of important revelation from God's heart.

Let's read the prayer.

Paul said in Ephesians 1:16, "[I] do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" — here's the prayer—"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"—he's going to restate what he's praying—"the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" —or opened" (Eph. 1:16-17).

Now Paul is going to give three very specific expressions of this prayer, of the glory of God being released in our lives. He says, number one, "that you may know the hope of His calling" (v. 18)—that you would have confidence about the subject of God's calling. That's the first way that we experience the glory of God according to prayer.

Number two: "What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (v. 18) —and then number three—"and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" (v. 19) —that we would understand what is the exceeding greatness of the power of God that's working in our lives.

UNDERSTANDING THIS PRAYER

Roman numeral I. Understanding this prayer. This is a very important prayer, and it's been the most-prayed prayer at IHOP-KC over the last seven years. It focuses on the subject of God imparting the spirit of glory into the life of a believer.

I have often looked at this as Paul's roadmap for discipleship. What Paul is doing in this prayer is revealing his view on how the human heart is motivated and strengthened. So I've looked at these three things, the spirit of glory touching my heart and the spirit of revelation in these three areas, and I know that if I get more of this, I'll be more motivated in righteousness, and I'll be stronger in the Spirit.

As a teacher I've focused on these subjects to call people into them. I don't always use this passage, but I understand that this is the thing Paul thought the church at Ephesus needed the most, because he said, "I do not cease to make mention of you in this prayer. This is the one prayer I don't ever stop praying; I pray this one all the time."

Paul understood the significance of what he was praying. This was a prayer that you can go pray for yourself; this is a prayer that you'll pray for your loved ones, believers and unbelievers. This is a prayer that gives you insight into how the heart is awakened, strengthened, and stirred.

THE SPIRIT OF THE REVELATION OF GOD

Paragraph B. Paul prayed one general prayer for the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of God, that we would know what God is like and how God acts. It's not just what He's like in His heart, but how He acts. It's what He's like and how He acts.

Paul said, "If the spirit of revelation touches us about God," he defined it as the eyes of our understanding being opened, and then he gave us three different expressions of the glory of God working in our life.

Number one, again, for the sake of repetition, that we would understand God's calling on our life. That's a vast subject, and we looked at it a bit last week. We'll give a little review today.

Number two: We pray to understand who we are to God, and why we do what we do. In other words, it's not enough to know what our calling is. We want to know why we do this calling, and how God feels about us while we're doing the calling that He has made clear to us.

THE REVELATION OF GOD'S POWER

Then, number three is very important, and this might seem secondary, but it's not at all: that we would have a spirit of revelation in terms of experiencing and our ability to understand how the power of God operates in our lives. This is a subject that causes much offense in the hearts of God's people. Everyone cares about the power of God, and we have these presuppositions of how God's power works. But then, when it doesn't work that way, we get offended at God. "God, You're not being true to Your Word, or maybe I'm so messed up that it will never work!"

The truth is that we don't have revelation about how the power of God works. It's a huge point. Many people conclude that they're so messed up that they'll never know the power of God, or they conclude that God's power doesn't work; that He isn't really interested in revealing His power. The truth is that they don't perceive how God administers the release of His power in His kingdom. It's a huge subject.

REVELATION ON THE PERSONAL CALLING OF GOD

Roman numeral II. A bit of review from last week: Walking in the confidence, or the hope—you can use those words interchangeably—of God's calling in our life.

Paragraph A. Paul prayed that each person would receive revelation about how God reviews their unique calling. I outlined three dimensions of God's unique calling for your life. There's an internal dimension; there's an external dimension in terms of what we refer to as our ministry; and there's an eternal dimension, which is what we will do in our calling in the age to come.

The three dimensions aren't enough; there are also two aspects to each one of those three dimensions. There's an individual aspect and there's a corporate aspect. The corporate aspect of our calling is a very significant part of our calling. It's an aspect that many believers rarely think about, but it's a very important biblical subject.

A BREAKTHROUGH OF REVELATION IN THE HEART

Paragraph B. Just to review, in each one of these three dimensions of our calling, as well as in both aspects of them, the internal, the external, and the eternal, and then the individual and the corporate, we need revelation in the whole array of understanding. We need a breakthrough of revelation in the heart.

We need a paradigm shift because the thoughts that we have naturally about each one of these subjects are the wrong thoughts. What we think most naturally is exactly opposite of what the truth is. So it actually takes revelation to make sense of these, because if we don't have these things right, our hearts get injured and they remain dull and stagnant.

When we get these subjects right, our spirit is vibrant. It's critical, and that's why Paul said, "I do not cease to pray this one prayer for you." If you get this right, you will walk differently in the Lord; if you don't get it right, which is the natural way, it will hurt your life. Our natural way of thinking is exactly opposite on every one of these points.

OUR PRIMARY CALLING IS THE INTERNAL CALLING

Paragraph C. This bears repeating; I've said it for three weeks in a row, but it bears repeating. Our primary calling is the internal calling. The primary calling is the internal calling, and it's the calling to be a faithful disciple of Jesus who loves God. We are first called to be lovers of God, and this embraces what the world calls foolish.

This is our internal calling, and this is our highest calling in this age.

THE CALLING TO THE SO-CALLED FOOLISH THINGS

You can't repeat 1 Corinthians 1:27 too many times, because it gives us the whole grid of understanding how God leads His kingdom. This is an absolutely stunning revelation, and until this is a revelation, even as a believer you will stumble and trip over it until God reveals the certainty and the finality of the way He leads His kingdom.

Here's how He leads it: He has chosen the things that men call foolish, and He has chosen the things that men call weak—prayer, fasting, humility, meekness, serving, all the things in the Sermon on the Mount, and He has chosen this lifestyle under the anointing of the Spirit, under His eye and under the release of the Spirit, to topple and literally overthrow the kingdoms of this world.

There is a time in history at the second coming where the people who walk in what the world calls foolish and weak will actually be used by God to change the direction of natural history.

It's not just that we make an impact in the spirit, but natural history will be completely changed based on God watching the people of the earth, the Body of Christ, embracing weakness. He has watched them through the generations, and with the Spirit moving and Jesus returning, He will literally shame the wise and overthrow the strong in a physical way, in an outward way in history.

That is coming at the second coming.

The problem is that until we have a revelation of the value of weak and foolish things to God, even we as believers are offended at them. We need revelation of our internal calling. We need to know that this lifestyle is, in fact, valuable to God, and necessary from His point of view.

OUR TEMPORARY, EXTERNAL CALLING

Paragraph D. Now we're moving from our internal calling to our temporary, external calling, which we typically think of as our ministry. Our temporal, external calling includes our position or function in the marketplace or in a ministry organization or in our home.

The passage that's so important, right from the lips of Jesus, is Matthew 25:21. It says that on the last day, at the time of the second coming, He will say this to His people: "You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things" (Mt. 15:21). Sometimes we focus so much on becoming the ruler over many things when the Lord returns that we lose the power of the few things that God has given us to do.

Then Jesus said in Luke 19, "You were faithful in a very little" (Lk. 19:17). One time He said "few things" and the other time He said "very little things."

I've repeated this for three weeks in a row, but we have to get clear on this: What I want to say is that we need revelation on our calling, and this is a significant part of what the Bible says and history verifies.

THE SMALLNESS OF TEMPORAL CALLINGS

It's not just that the Bible says it, but history verifies it as well, that 99.99999 percent—now, the Bible doesn't use that number of course, but of every believer in history, most have been given few things or very little. There is only a small amount of people in all of history who have been given many things in this age.

However, our culture tells us the only things that are important are the many things. It's happened for generations and generations, that many of the people who want to serve God only aspire for many things. They want to be that 1/1000th of one percent of history. They assume that's what they're supposed to do, and they end up getting offended at God as they chase fantasy.

The Lord says, "I never even gave that to you. You got that out of a book or some self-help preacher's conference somewhere where the preacher said that you were 'the One.' You said, 'Yes, I'm the One, and that's confirmation!' and you ran with it. I didn't tell you that; you got it from a positive-thinking self-help preacher's conference. You didn't get it from the Word of God."

It's critical that we line up with God.

GOD IS NOT IMPRESSED WITH NUMBERS

You may be one of those 1/1000th of one percent who make a huge impact in the sense of the way that men measure impact. I'm talking about in the natural in terms of numbers. Only a small number of people do that, and it's not impressive to God at all when someone touches more numbers. I mean, God is God; He made 100 billion galaxies, is what some say. The Milky Way is one of the smaller ones.

He's not impressed if you touch a thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred thousand. God isn't thinking, "Wow, here's Billy Graham. He touched 100,000. Wow Jesus, look, he's coming." God isn't impressed by any of that. We are impressed because we get our sense of significance out of it, but there's substantial falsehood in the whole concept. It's non-biblical; it seduces people for a couple of years into a little more heightened activity, but it doesn't have staying power at all.

I've watched this for thirty years, and the people can typically hang on to, "I'm going to be the really big one!" for three to five years, and they have a lot of zeal, and after those three to five years they lose their vision for bigness and they lose their zeal in God and they're offended.

I've watched this in multitudes over the years. What God really called them to was to be faithful in their temporal, external calling in small things and in few things, and they would encounter Him in that. If the Lord surprises them and makes it big, then that's His business.

OUR CALLING IN THE AGE TO COME

Paragraph E. We have our eternal calling, which is much larger in impact than anything we'll accomplish in this age. It's real, and it takes the spirit of revelation to see this.

The apostles emphasized and alluded to their eternal calling in the age to come; they emphasized and alluded to it directly and indirectly many times in the New Testament. This was a very big thing to them. It's almost non-existent in the Church today. It is critical that we get the spirit of revelation concerning our calling in God, and not just our temporal, external calling, but our eternal one.

I spent all last week developing these points, so I'm going to move on now.

THE GLORY OF OUR CORPORATE CALLING

Roman numeral III. I want to touch a subject that we really didn't look at last week. It's our corporate calling.

Did you know that you're joined to other believers in a corporate way in time and in eternity, and that it's a very important part of who you are in terms of your assignment on the earth?

This is an idea that's really strange, particularly to the Western world. In the Western world, we value individuality and individual success. Particularly in the East, they value the corporate far more than the West does. Different nations in the East have a value in their culture, so they grasp this revelation far easier because their paradigm is already pointed in that direction.

In the West this is not only weird, it's even offensive sometimes. We think, "God, I don't really care about the whole thing! I just want me to be anointed, and for me to do something big."

The Lord wants us connected together. It's the team concept.

STANDING BEFORE THE LORD AS MINISTRIES

Paragraph A. We stand before God as corporate people on several levels. We stand before God in terms of ministries. What I'll say about the International House of Prayer is true of every ministry, what I'm about to say here. Those whom God has joined to this vision by the Holy Spirit, a small part of their ministry identity in terms of their assignment is related to whom God connects us to by the Holy Spirit.

Some people come through the ministry here and they're here for a few months or a little longer or shorter, and they appreciate it and they get blessed and they contribute some, but they've never been joined to it by the Holy Spirit. That's great, because the Holy Spirit has another place of joining for them.

Some people He's brought through and done that. The Lord will join you to several ministries or cities throughout the course of your life. It's a wonderful thing when He does that. When He does that, you are a vital part, though you might not make a big impact in the eyes of men; but from God's point of view it's a critical part of your assignment on the earth to do your part in that corporate group, as strange it seems that God even evaluates groups of people together.

Now, our biggest evaluation is individual, but there's a sense in which cities and nations and even generations will have some evaluation together. It's an odd idea to the Western mindset, but it's a biblical idea. Again, it's a secondary part of our identity, but the groups that we have this identity with are those groups to which the Holy Spirit has joined us.

OUR CALLING AS A PEOPLE

We'll answer together in part, and we'll stand together before the Lord. Our biggest calling and our biggest victory is in our corporate joining. A lot of people want a big calling in this age, and not just in the age to come; our big calling is the calling we have together.

Of course, the best analogy is the 1 Corinthians 12 functions of the body. Paul said that there are least members, those that are least esteemed, functioning in your physical body internally; unless you're a physician, neither you nor I would understand how they work because it's intricate and vital. If they don't work, then we die.

God has so arranged the body of Christ that people have a function which isn't seen, but is very vital to God's purposes, even if you can't measure it. If you get something just a little wrong in the valves of your heart, or in your stomach or kidneys, in the relationships between vital organs, you would die. Yet no one talks about those parts of the human body, but they are critical.

Paul said, "That is how God has arranged the Body of Christ in cities and in nations." Though we don't really see it, God sees it, and it's real, and it's a part of who we are. All of us long to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, and God has actually answered that call.

Often when God answers it, because we have a greater revelation of the individual value, we hesitate to take hold of that revelation. All of us were created to function in our fullness only in Holy Spirit-connected relationships, meaning that the Holy Spirit joins us to the mandate of different ministries. He gives us a sense of, "That is the mandate that is in My heart, and those are the vision and the values that are in My heart."

CORPORATE PROMISES TO CITIES AND CHURCHES

Paragraph B. Jesus gave corporate promises to the seven churches in Asia. He gave the promises to all the saints in an entire city. Those promises applied to their life in the natural on the earth, and it also applied to their life in the age to come. I'm talking about the entire city that was born again; they had promises that applied to them as a people.

Paul prayed for the regional church at Thessalonica to walk out their destiny together, here in 2 Thessalonians 1. He says, "I pray always that you" —and he's talking about a whole regional church—"would enter into the fullness of your purpose in this age and in the age to come" (2 Thes. 1:11, paraphrased).

It wasn't limited to this age. They wouldn't enter into their fullness, if you read it in context, until the second coming of Christ. The whole Church has something together in the age to come, and Paul prayed for it. Again, to the Western mindset that so values individuality, it's such a strange idea that we have a corporate identity, and that part of our identity is corporate.

WE WILL BE PRESENTED TOGETHER

Paragraph C. Paul told them in 2 Corinthians 4:14, "I want you to know this, and I want you to understand this, saints at Corinth: that when God the Father raises us up with Jesus, He will present us together" (2 Cor. 4:14, paraphrased).

How would you like to be presented before the Lord, and there's Paul the apostle as one of the gang? "Hey, this looks good. I want Paul in my little swirl..."

Well, I've got some of you guys. My point is that when Jesus raises people from the dead, He will actually present those who were joined to one another in a Holy Spirit-joining, because God assigned them to that purpose.

ALL OUR SPIRIT-BASED RELATIONSHIPS ARE OF ETERNAL SUBSTANCE

When you're assigned to a purpose, it doesn't mean that it always goes well. It's like in any other relationship, whether in marriage or the home or the marketplace: It doesn't always go well when God joins you to someone. It doesn't mean that it's always easy. A lot of times when God joins, the devil comes and attacks, and it's harder in some seasons.

The idea is that God will present us together at the second coming. I'm wondering, among some of us, some of us will actually go up at the resurrection together. These relationships are real, and they're actually eternal, and they're purposeful in the mind of God.

It's not an accident that you're sitting here in this city in this time. You are among us. Many of you were shot like an arrow here, and the Lord will shoot you like an arrow into other cities at other times and other seasons of your life, and that matters.

THE THESSALONIANS, PAUL'S HOPE AND GLORY

Paul went on in 1 Thessalonians 2 and said, "What is our hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing?"

He asked this question and they said, "What is your hope and glory, Paul?"

He said, "Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19)—talking about the resurrection. He said, "When Jesus appears in the sky and raises us from the dead, you will be my glory and my joy. We will be together."

You say, "How can Paul be with the Thessalonians and the Corinthians?" Well, I think the Lord can work it all out. They're going to be together at the second coming in a conscious way because it's Paul's joy. This isn't like he's on the other side of the universe saying, "Thumbs up!" It's the joy that Paul will have at the second coming when he's actually together with those to whom God joined him.

Your mind can really go somewhere with this. “Whoa! Our relationships aren’t only important now, they’re eternal relationships! Stuart, we’re going to be buddies for years and years, and we’ll be high-fiving for billions of years, telling the stories.

“Is that cool? I’m sure when we get raised from the dead, you’ll be right in front of me. Stuart, slow down, give me a chance to catch up.”

GENERATIONS ARE JUDGED TOGETHER

Paragraph D. Generations are judged together. Entire generations are judged in the presence of other generations together. I mean, the whole lot of them are judged, from a city or from a region. It’s talking about how the generations from one city or from one region will be present with others from another region from one generation.

Only the Lord knows how all of this works, but the Lord has such precision in the way He arranges His body in time, and the way He arranges us in time has implications in eternity. It’s a part of who we are and what we do together is a part of our calling.

Part of my calling is locked up in your hands. Part of who I am and what I am to do, I cannot do without Matt Candler doing his part. We have to do it together, or I can’t do my part if he doesn’t do his part. I can’t do the fullness of what God called me to do apart from his faithfulness.

“Matt, go hard!”

“OK, you go hard, too!”

“OK!”

Paul said, “Man, I’m praying for you night and day, and you have to go all the way, because we’re in this thing together.” That’s part of our corporate calling, and that’s a major thing.

THE SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF THE GENERATION OF THE LORD’S RETURN

Roman numeral IV. The spiritual identity of the generation in which the Lord returns.

There are promises and requirements for the Body of Christ for the generation in which the Lord returns. I believe we’re in the beginning of that generation. There are promises, but they are very precise requirements as well.

The generation in which the Lord returns will be the only blameless generation in history. The people who are alive in the Body of Christ when He comes won’t just be presented blameless because of the gift of righteousness, but the work of the Spirit will be such that they’ll be living without compromise globally. We have this identity together, if in this fact is that generation, and I believe with all of my heart that it is. The saints in Europe, and in Africa, and in South America, we have something together. Those that remain and are alive when the Lord comes will be walking blameless across the nations.

It’s really important to anyone who has revelation of this part of their calling that the whole Body of Christ is going forward. It isn’t about, “I’ll help you... as long as you join my organization!”

Beloved, you can tell them, “We are in the same generation together, and I want you to do better. I actually have a personal investment before God in you doing better. It has nothing to do with you giving me money or joining my organization. I don’t want you to be one of my network churches; that’s not what it’s about. We have an identity together in the same generation before the Lord.”

It gives you a kingdom perspective when you understand this. That generation that is blameless will have a spirit of prayer and a bridal identity. “The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come.’”

A GENERATION OF POWER AND HARVEST

Paragraph B. It’s a generation that will see a breakthrough of power. It’s a generation that will see a harvest of souls from all nations. No other generation will ever see this measure of breakthrough or harvest; only one. We are in this thing together.

There are certain requirements and there are certain things that are necessary for the Body of Christ to move globally forward together, and Paul said, “I am praying for the spirit of revelation, that you would have confidence about God’s calling.” Beloved, part of our calling is who we are together in this generation.

A GENERATION OF HEROES AND RESISTERS

Paragraph C. It will be a generation that is prepared courageously and victoriously to resist the Antichrist. There is only one generation that will ever be prepared and have the necessary courage and victory to resist the greatest manifestation of evil in human history.

We’re in this thing together. It really matters what the saints are doing in South America. We’re in this thing together.

A GENERATION THAT PROVOKES THE JEWS TO JEALOUSY

Paragraph D. There’s only one generation that will provoke Israel to jealousy, when all of Israel gets saved in one generation. Of the Gentile believers throughout history, individuals have provoked Israel, but there is only one generation that makes the ethnic Jew, the natural Jew say, “I want Jesus because of the way that you Gentiles are living.”

There is only one generation that will collectively do that. It is part of our identity.

OUR UNIQUE ASSIGNMENT AS A GROUP

Paragraph E. Our assignment at IHOP–KC, part of our unique assignment, because every ministry has a unique assignment and has a particular assignment from God’s wisdom. We don’t get to vote on that assignment; that assignment is assigned to us.

Now the Lord so constitutes us that there is a “yes” in our spirit. He builds us in such a way that we agree with that assignment, but there are difficult times in it. We are called to keep a sanctuary going twenty-four hours a day for years and years and years. That is our assignment.

I would never have guessed or picked such an assignment in my early days. I didn’t even like prayer meetings. The Lord could have whispered, “Hey little guy, you’ll really be surprised when you find out what I’m grooming you for.” I didn’t like prayer meetings at all! I’ve told you this before: I liked God, but I didn’t like

Bible study and I didn't like prayer meetings. But I liked God and I liked teaching meetings and I liked hanging around afterwards and I liked the singing. I didn't like prayer and Bible study, and I hated fasting.

So the Lord was smiling, saying, "That little guy, I'm really going to surprise him in a few years."

My primary assignment in this age is to keep a sanctuary going twenty-four hours a day, and a number of you have been joined to that assignment, and we have an identity together. I can't succeed if you're not faithful, and you can't succeed if I'm not faithful in this part of our mandate.

You can read more about that, and some particulars about our assignment. This paragraph isn't meant to be comprehensive, but I wanted to lay it out, and if you're joined by the Spirit to this vision and the values of this house and this mandate, you are necessary, whether anyone ever knows you in a public way at IHOP-KC or whether anyone ever recognizes you at all.

You may be one of the members of the body whom nobody sees, but if that member of the body doesn't function, the heart actually stops if that valve doesn't work.

WE HAVE A CORPORATE IDENTITY THAT IS ETERNAL

Paragraph F. We have a corporate identity, too, that is eternal. That is a big subject, and I don't even want to go there, but it's a huge subject.

THE REVELATION OF THE GLORY OF BEING GOD'S INHERITANCE

Roman numeral V. Paul said that we have to have revelation to understand the glory of being God's inheritance.

There is a glory to this. He said, "Father, give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that they would experience and understand what the riches, the wealth of the glory of belonging to God, and being what God wants." This takes revelation. Without the spirit of revelation, we will never grasp this. Flesh and blood will not reveal this to you, but the Father who is in heaven by the Holy Spirit.

Now we study and we fill our mind with this, but it takes the Holy Spirit quickening for us to grow incrementally, step by step. It's not like one day the light goes on. The light goes on progressively, and we begin to understand who we are. We are God's inheritance and this is massive. It dynamically affects why we do what we do in our calling.

OK, I've got my calling and I know what I'm to do. I cannot do my temporal, external calling, which is IHOP-KC and some other things in my years of ministry, without knowing how dear I am to God. When I know how dear I am to God, it changes the way I do my calling. When we understand who we are before God, our calling doesn't burn us out, but when we do our calling without the revelation of who we are as His inheritance, the very calling itself burns us out and wears us out because we're not replenished on the inside by our encounters with God and how dear we are to Him.

It's critical that once we know our calling, we begin to understand that it's the "why" behind the "what." It's not like we understand our calling first, and then we know who we are as God's inheritance, and then we find out how God's power works, number three. We grow in all three of those arenas together. We grow in understanding of them by revelation over the years.

THE CHURCH IS JESUS' INHERITANCE

Paragraph A. We must know the “why” behind the “what.” The Church is Jesus’ inheritance. This is a staggering concept, that God has an inheritance He’s waiting for that He doesn’t have yet. How can you create the world in Genesis 1, and something exist that you don’t yet have?

There’s the one thing that exists that He wants; it’s the only that He wants. He wants it the most; it’s the thing to which He’s most committed: He wants voluntary lovers out of the human race.

God will not force our response; it must be given to Him. He is going to reveal how dear we are to Him, and what He has called us to—the dearest and the nearest relationship that any of the created order can have with the Godhead. We are called into the nearest and dearest relationship that is available to the whole created order with God. We are His bride.

When the nearness and the dearness of that touches our spirits, we say, “I love You; I want to be wholly Yours.”

It’s critical that we understand this. The devil doesn’t want us to understand this. We call it the bridal paradigm, but it’s more than a brochure and it’s more than a slogan. Really, it’s the essence of why we were created and why we exist.

If we go after our calling without knowing who we are as His inheritance, the calling itself will burn us out. The disappointments will mount up, and with the surprises and the weariness of our calling, we will have nothing with which to sustain it.

THE HIGH COST OF LOVE

Paragraph A. Being God’s inheritance speaks to how dear we are to Him. It speaks to how He feels about us while we’re doing our calling.

“So I know my calling, but what if God is impatient, and writes me off when I stumble?”

Beloved, being His inheritance gives us insight into how He feels about us while we’re doing the calling: the internal, the external, the eternal, the corporate, and the individual. I have to know how He feels about me each step of the way; I have to know.

Being God’s inheritance speaks about what it cost God to walk out His love relationship. When Jesus says, “You are My inheritance,” that’s not like the end of the story. He says, “You are My inheritance,” and He shows us His nail-scarred hands. “It cost Me more than you will ever know for you to be My inheritance. I had to purchase you. What I had to go through because I wanted you to be Mine is huge.”

What it cost Jesus was huge. What He requires is His holy, jealous love. It’s not jealousy in the human sense, it’s jealousy because He knows that only in a reciprocal love is the relationship safe. It’s the dearest thing to Him, and He wants it safe, and He wants it wholesome.

In Matthew 22:37 He calls us: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.” Do you know why He calls us to love Him with all of our heart and strength? Because He loves us with all of His heart and all of His strength. His holy, jealous love demands a reciprocal response in loving with all of our strength, because it’s the

only way the relationship can be enjoyed; it's the only way it can be protected; and it's the only way it can be expressed.

We have to walk equally yoked in love; we have to love Him with all our heart. Our heart is a lot weaker than His, but we can give all of our heart in the weakness in which we do that. He only asks us to love Him with all our strength because He loves us with all His strength, and it's the revelation that we are His inheritance that unveils this to us.

THE PRIZE OF ALL THE AGES

Paragraph B. The Father promised Jesus a great prize. The Church is the prize of all the ages that the Father has prepared for the Son. We are the reward. Can you fathom this? We are the reward that God gave Jesus.

Why? Because we are what Jesus most desires. You are what He wants most. Think of this: You are who He wants most. Beloved, this crowns your life with dignity and honor and glory, as it says in Hebrews 2:8. He has crowned us with glory and honor. We are crowned in glory by virtue of the fact that we are what He wants most, and we are that to which He is most committed.

When this revelation touches our spirit, it absolutely awakens a fountain inside us of persevering devotion. Paul said it best in Philippians 3:7-8: "I consider it rubbish" (Phil. 3:8, paraphrased). He said, "All those things I gave up for love; I love You, and it's rubbish, and it means nothing to me," because he saw the preciousness of how dear he was to Jesus.

Jesus has invested so much in our lives—I don't just mean at the cross. That's a huge statement. You don't ever want to say *just* and put the word *cross* in that sentence. The cross is so huge. I'm talking about what He has invested in your life since you became a believer. Some of you have been walking with the Lord five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, and the Lord has invested much, and that time will never be recovered. What He has invested in you in that time is gone forever.

There is a certain dimension of what He entrusts to you. He entrusts it to you, which means He trusts you with that part of what He has invested. That's a very big point. In the human sense, this is a very inadequate illustration, but I think it will help us to relate a little in the human sense.

I have heard this complaint over the years. A pastor works with a guy or a gal for ten or twenty years, and then they go and join another ministry. "I've invested so much in him or her, and how could they leave?"

"Well, because she belongs to God, and God told her to leave. That's how that happens."

"Yeah, but I've invested in her so much," or, "I've invested in him so much." "I've put time and energy and emotion, and I have given that which is costly to me."

The answer is, "But Jesus has put time and energy and that which is costly as well. He has invested in her."

My point is that there is a deep emotion when we invest in each other, and it's real. It doesn't have to have a negative expression to it, but the emotion is real.

YOU ARE THE INHERITANCE OF JESUS

What I want to do now is transfer that over. Jesus has real emotion about the investment that He has made in your life. It is real. When we understand that investment, we walk out our calling with Him, and we walk out our calling for Him. If our calling is little, which 99.99999999 percent of people have in terms of its impact on numbers of people, we're doing it with Him; we're doing it for Him; we're doing it in love with Him.

Beloved, when we understand that we are His inheritance, it changes our attitude toward the assignment He gave us. "I don't care if it's big or little; I just want it to be with You and I want it to be for You. I want to feel Your presence in it; I don't care about the size of it."

When we don't have the revelation that we are His inheritance, then we end up tripping over the smallness of our calling, or the rigors and difficulties of our calling. We trip and stumble and get burnt out because we're not replenished by the fact of who it is who called us to that small assignment. If I know the Lord assigned me to it, then it's no problem: I'm doing it with Him. I'm doing it in His sight and He values it and it's wonderful.

THE FRAGILE BEAUTY OF A WEAK, SINCERE LOVE

Paragraph E. Our most sincere efforts to love God are flawed and fragile.

I want to love God with all my heart. I say, "Lord, I love You with all my heart."

The Lord might say, "You really do, but it's really weak love. Your heart is really weak; it's fragile and it's flawed." There's defilement, and even all our motives have a certain defilement and darkness in them. There's an element of fallenness.

Here's the exciting thing: When we know that we are His inheritance, we don't fear that we're going to be disqualified in our calling, because we know we are His inheritance, and that He has invested His heart into us. We can say, as the Song of Solomon says, "I am dark, but lovely" —I am dark in my heart, but I am lovely to God.

Even in our weakness, we can stand with certainty that we're not being disqualified in our calling, because we know the implications of being His inheritance. The implication of being His inheritance is that He is tender towards us because He is wholehearted. In His kindness, He has focused it on us. He treats us with great kindness.

"YOU HAVE RAVISHED MY HEART"

Paragraph F. "You have ravished My heart" (Song 4:9). That is one of the most dynamic statements that God can ever speak to your heart about His heart and you.

I remember the time when I was in a conflict with a brother in the Body of Christ, and I was reading the Song of Solomon and studying it and preaching on it. I was saying, "Oh, Lord, this guy is wearing me out!" I said it a little more strongly than that, but that's good enough for now.

I mean, it rocked my boat when the Lord whispered in my heart. It was a stopper; it stopped me. The phrase came, "He ravishes My heart like you do." I remember the emotion I had. It was negative. I said, "No, no, no, no! That's not—do You know what he did?"

“Do you know what you do?”

“Lord, let’s not get personal about it! I’m talking about him! Do You know what he did?” I remember it was a real experience that jolted me, and then, a few minutes later, I said, “Wait a second. If God is ravished toward His people, then I have it made. If it works this way, this is good! If it works with all of His people, then it really works.”

I turned it around, and I trust that it was sanctified selfishness, but I turned it around and made it about me and I thought, “That’s a good doctrine, Lord.”

THE MAIN MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD

I remember when my two sons were young; they were five or six or something. One of them came in and said, “Dad, Dad! The other one did this and this and this!”

I said, “OK, that sounds like him.” I said, “What do you want me to do?” This is a true statement: He said, “I want you to beat him! Teach him a lesson!”

I said, “Beat him?”

He said, “Yeah!” He was serious and upset. “Beat him and teach him a lesson!”

I said, “Well, I can’t do that. I cannot beat him for that.”

He said, “Why?”

“Because,” I said, “he’s my main man just like you are.” I called both of them “my main man.” I said, “He’s my main man, and I can’t beat my main man.”

When I was telling him that, this verse came to me, and that experience with the guy I was struggling with. The Lord whispered in my heart, “That’s why I’m not going to beat this other guy, because he’s My main man. I love him like I love you.” It really changes the way we view the people who are wearing us out.

A TREASURE HIDDEN IN A FIELD

Paragraph G. We’re going to end with this. The deep relationship between Jesus and the Church is costly to both.

Here are these two excellent parables. In Matthew 13, the kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field. A man finds the treasures and hides it, and for joy he sells all and buys the field. So the man is running across the field and he’s running late, and he crosses through an empty lot, and he trips over something, and he looks down and there’s a treasure. He says, “Oh my goodness! No one owns this, I guess.”

So he digs a hole and hides it. Then he goes to a guy and says, “Hey, I want to buy that lot.”

The other guy says this number; the first guy says, “I don’t have that much.”

The other guy says, “Well, that is my final offer.” The guy says, “I have to have that lot,” so he sells everything he has to buy that field because he wants that treasure.

ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Jesus says in Matthew 13:45, “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls who, when he had found one pearl of great price, sold everything he had and bought it.”

Both of these parables can be applied in both directions, meaning, in the first direction, Jesus found a treasure and it’s you. He found a pearl and it’s you. It cost Him everything to have you—everything! He sold everything. What He went through to get you in relationship with Him is beyond anything we can understand in the natural.

It goes the other way, too. We are the merchant, and Jesus is the treasure, and He is the pearl, and when we find out by revelation the treasure that He is, the beautiful pearl, we sell everything. We sell everything gladly when we see who He is, how beautiful and how dear He is to us.

Again, that’s what Paul said in Philippians 3:7-8. He said, “I consider it rubbish to give up things.” It means nothing to give up things for love. So this idea of being His inheritance means it’s costly to God and it’s costly to us. Paul said, “I pray that the revelation of the wealth of the glory, the wealth of the glory of all the implications of belonging to God would touch your heart.”

Part of the wealth of the glory of the implications of this is that you would sell to Him because He sold all for you. It’s the most natural response when revelation that we are His inheritance touches our heart.

Amen; let’s stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Next time we’re going to look at the vast subject called the revelation of the power of God. That’s a big subject. That isn’t a small one; it’s a huge one. We have so much offense and confusion about how God administers His power in His kingdom. If we have revelation of it, it will make our hearts rest in peace. We’ll cooperate with Him instead of resisting Him.

I’m going to ask those who are saying, “I need a real breakthrough” —all of us do, of course, but you’re saying, “I’m in a season in my life where I need a breakthrough on this idea of the revelation that I’m His inheritance. I want to know a little about how dear I am, and what it cost Him, and how energized He is about our relationship. That makes more sense now as to why He’s being so focused on my heart relationship.”

If you’re in a place where you say, “I really need a breakthrough in this area,” I want to invite you to come up and stand on these lines.

Jesus, Jesus, we love You, Lord. I love You, Lord. Let’s lift our voices and let’s sing with our spirit and with our understanding.

Father of glory, Father of glory, I ask You to release the spirit of revelation. I ask You to open the eyes of our understanding, that we would know what it is to be Your inheritance. In the name of Jesus, show us Your glory, O God.

Oh, that we would know You and see You. I want to know what it is to be Yours. Show me Your glory, God. We ask You, Father of glory, open the eyes of my understanding. I want to give you what You deserve. This is my cry: Open my eyes; open the eyes of my understanding. This is my cry, Lord.

Lord, I ask You to break in now. Release Your fire, O God; release the fire of Your Spirit. Open up my eyes, God; open up my eyes, Lord, I ask. Lord, release the spirit of glory.

I ask You for dreams and visions about Your heart. Lord, release dreams and visions about how You feel about us. What are You looking for, Lord? What are You searching for, Lord? I want to give You my love. I want to love You with all my heart and all my strength.