

I. Review

Last week, we saw the benefit of building a solid, Biblical structure in our lives. Obviously, we look at that as our own body, which is the temple of the Lord, building it in a spiritual sense so that it becomes the outpost, so to speak; the fortress for God to be able to work through us and do the work.

➤ The Day of Trouble

We talked about the day of trouble, and I showed you doctrinally how that Psalm 20 is dealing with Israel in the Tribulation period as they go through their day of trouble. We likened it historically to David and Saul, and how David was going through his struggles. Then I likened it to you and me and our ability to withstand our day of trouble, which we are facing right now as Christians—the evil day that comes, as in Ephesians 6—and not only to withstand it, but understand that God wants to use us through that, and being used of God to finish our work.

I showed you last week how Israel went into captivity back in 606 BC. All of the Jews, no matter whether they were apostate, against God, or for God, everybody went into the captivity. It is much like the New Testament captivity that the church is in today. The church is in disarray; it is in a mess. You have pastors, and I am not saying they are bad guys, but they do not know what to do with their churches. They go so far that a church stagnates; they have no vision, they do not know how to motivate the people, and they do not see what is around them. They do not see the function and the job that a New Testament church should have today.

Across Christianity, we find that Christianity is in its own brand of captivity. But just like, and I showed you last week, how all the good Jews in the Old Testament went into captivity under Babylon (Southern tribes) and Assyria (Northern tribes), God still used them. **The captivity did not stop the plan of God. In fact, in many cases, the captivity enhanced the plan of God and focused more on what God wanted to do.** Just as He did that in the Old Testament, it does not matter what we are facing today. It does not matter that Christianity is upside down, that churches are preaching today without the Bible, and pastors do not know what they are doing. It does not matter. God still has a work for us, and through this captivity, just like the Old Testament, we will finish our work, and we will get the job done for the Lord.

➤ Perspective

In almost anything in life, the key word will be one simple word: perspective. **Perspective is the ability to see things as they really are, not as they are made to appear.** I think that is a problem in churches today with many pastors, and I am not saying they are bad guys, many of them are good guys, but they lack perspective. They do not see what is going on around them, or at least they do not understand it. The devil has got the world, (and even Christianity has prepared it and made it to appear one way), like everything is going fine, like everything is really

good. When in reality, in the church of Laodicea found in Revelation 3 which is our church period today, you can see that is not true. It is a mess.

Perspective will always give you your position in any given situation. If I am dealing with somebody or dealing with a circumstance, because of the principles of the word of God that we use in dealing with people and you use in your own life, no matter what it may be, you see the position you are in. You see and understand what you are really up against; what you are really dealing with. It shows you where you are at in any given situation to be able to function in it biblically and help people or get the job done. It always works that way.

➤ **We Need to Have the Perception to See our Position so that we can Understand our Purpose**

Last week, hopefully, you saw that perception will always give you purpose. When you understand and are able to see things the way they are, and you get the right position with God in time, then it will give you the right purpose. You will see now what your job is, what your purpose is. You will see and understand what most of God's people never do, bless their hearts: Why did God save you? Why did He reach down out of heaven, as Psalms 40 says, out of the miry clay, and pull you out of it and set your feet upon a rock? Why? Why you? Why are you here this morning? Why did He give you a King James Bible, the absolute perfect word of God, when 99% of God's people do not have it out there? Why you?

When you understand why God allowed you to be born in the time period that you have been born in, when you understand and have perception to see what in Christianity we are up against today, it will give you purpose. You will no longer just wander through it. I think most of God's people, unfortunately, are like that little mouse in a little maze where there is a piece of cheese at the end. He must try to sniff his way through the maze, bumping into dead ends and moving here and moving there until he finally gets to the cheese. For us, the cheese is Heaven. We go through life banging our head against every dead-end street, trying to go down this road and that road. When the truth of the matter is, **God's purpose gives you a straight line that you walk that gets you where God wants you to be.**

Hopefully last week you saw that purpose, and how that God allowing us to be His tools in the final stages of man's earthly existence, where man gets to choose what he wants to do, where he gets to run it the way he wants to run it, where he can turn his back on God, throw the Bible away, turn the world upside down if he wants to. But we are in that world. The key that you and I must have is we have to have the perception to see our position, that we can understand our purpose.

I would say, generally speaking, the most important times in the history of planet Earth were and will be:

- The time leading up to the first coming of Christ.
- The times that we now live in that are leading up to the second coming of Christ.

If you know anything about history, and certainly the world we live in today, both times were terribly confusing. There was a lot of misinformation. There were a lot of things being done in the name of Christianity that had nothing to do with God. In both cases, what God needed then and now were men and women who had the ability and the perception to be able to clarify to a lost world and cut through the deception and the delusion and the fog of uncertainty, to show men and women today clearly what God is doing. That is our job. That is your job, if you are saved, that is the job of Old Paths, that is the job of me as pastor, and that is the job of every child of God under the sound of my voice. But the key is, do you have perception? **Perception will always give you your position, and position will always show you your purpose in life.**

I think one of the most tragic things, and there are lots of things that are tragic today in Christianity, but I think the most tragic thing in Christianity is the child of God who goes through life without any purpose. Do not think going to church on Sunday is purpose. Do not think, "Well, I am saved, and I am on my way to Heaven" is purpose. God saved every one of us and gave us a purpose in life. The problem is most of God's people never see that purpose because they never find out their position because they never get any perspective. They go through life seeing things as the world makes it look for us.

II. The Calm in the Midst of the Storms of Life

Now today, we are going to look at Psalms 21. We are moving through these Psalms, and I did not plan this when I started coming through, but I can see now, and I am going to hitchhike off of that, how each one of these builds on the previous week. I want to talk to you today about the calm in the midst of the storms of life. Aaron had no idea what I was preaching this morning. I had no idea what he was singing this morning, but his song fit right into where we are going today because his song was, "Till the storm passes over." I want to talk to you about that.

We have been told all of our lives, and wrongly told by preachers and pastors, (and I understand why they say it), that once you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, all your problems are over. You know that is not true. Now all your problems may be over as far as eternity begins, but once you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, the warfare of the believer starts. You never posed a threat to the devil before you got saved. You were his. He had you locked down and locked up. But once you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, now you pose a threat. Now he is going to come after you. Now we know that the storms of life are going to hit us full gale and full force. I want to talk to you today about how you survive that. We have talked about building a structure. Okay, we are going to take it to the next level here today.

➤ The Eye of the Storm

I have been told this, though I have never experienced it personally, I believe it is true. I have been told that when there is a tornado or a hurricane, you have this tremendous destruction that is taking place in a wide swath circular area where people are dying, homes are being destroyed, and lives are being absolutely decimated. But in the middle of that storm, in the middle of that tornado, in the middle of that hurricane, is what they call the eye of the tornado, the eye of the

hurricane. If you were stationary in the eye of that tornado or hurricane, it would be the calmest, most peaceful place on Earth at that point in time. There would be no destruction. There would be no howling wind. There would be no 80, 90, 100 mile an hour winds that come in that eye. The eye of that tornado is as peaceful as you could ever want it to be, but around that eye is all the destruction that is going on.

I have thought to myself for many years that it is a picture of the Christian life. The rest of the believer, what we have in Christ and the peace that we have, should be that while the world is going to hell around us, while the world is being destroyed, while people's lives are being destroyed, you and I live in the eye of that storm with the peace of God in our lives and the rest that God gives us. How do we get there? How do we do that? I mean, how does that take place? The life of a Christian should be just like a tornado. The world around us is destroying everything, but in the center, we have the peace that passes all understanding.

Now today, let us look at Psalms chapter 21, and I want to try to help you today. I do not know what level you are on spiritually. I do not know what you are looking for in a sermon. I do not know what you are looking for in a church. But I do know this, we live in a world that is a catastrophe. If there is anything that is missing today in 99% of God's people's lives, it is this peace and this rest that God wants us to have. I want to talk to you today about something to think about that you probably have never heard before and you probably never thought about before. I have felt it and thought about it for many, many, many years. I just never really preached it.

III. How do we get the Rest and Peace of the Believer?

Today, let us look at Psalms chapter 21. Let us read it; we are going to read all 13 verses here.

Psalms 21:1-13 The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

2. Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.

3. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

4. He asked life of thee, [and] thou gavest [it] him, [even] length of days for ever and ever.

5. His glory [is] great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

6. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceedingly glad with thy countenance.

7. For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.

8. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

10. *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

11. *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, [which] they are not able [to perform].*

12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready [thine arrows] upon thy strings against the face of them.*

13. *Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: [so] will we sing and praise thy power.*

This Psalm doctrinally will be all about the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole Psalm is dealing with Him being crowned King of kings, Lord of lords over the whole Earth. You find that in Psalms 47:2, Zechariah 14:9, and again, Psalms 72. This is when the Lord comes back, and He is established as the King of planet Earth. But as you go through it **historically, you can also see David making a reference to his own kingship, and God's hand against his enemies.** But as you continue to read it, inspirationally you see it goes much further than just King Jesus and King David.

If you know anything about your Bible, you know that when Jesus Christ comes back and we get our glorified bodies, the Bible tells us in Romans 8:17 that we are going to become joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Whatever He is, we become. We become just like Him. We get His body; we already have His mind in the word of God, then you will have it inside you. For all practical purposes, you now are a joint heir with Him. As you read on through the Bible in places like Revelation 1:6, you will also find out that being part of that joint heirship and being a joint heir with Him, we also become kings. As Revelation 1:6 tells us, that He makes us priests and kings. We reign with Him. We reign with King Jesus because we are King Jesus. It is an incredible concept, which is unknown to most of God's people today. They think when you die and go to Heaven or the Lord comes back, you get issued a harp and a pair of wings and you float around for eternity, and you pluck the harp. Hopefully there is more to it than that. And there is.

Today, I want to talk to you about the rest of the believer, the peace that we have in Christ. How do we get that rest? How do we get that peace? I mean, God saves you, He gives you salvation, but He does not just give you the peace at the time of salvation. You have the ability to have it, but you have to do something to get it. I want to talk to you about that today.

IV. Noah's Example: Building a Strong Structure

So far we have seen, as I showed you how this thing has built upon it, **in Psalms 19, it showed us that we are to build a structure in our life that will protect us.** I showed you how that structure is built around six key principles. When you put those things into your life, then you build your house upon a rock. When the winds of life and the storms of life prevail against it, it stands. Most of God's people build their house upon the sand, like the story in the Bible, when the wind and the storms of life come, there is great loss, everything collapses. But in Psalms 19, we saw the importance of building a strong body, a strong structure. **In Psalms 20, last week, we**

saw why you should do that, because it showed us the day of trouble. How that our structure will be built on a rock. I showed you also that it is built inside the mountain of God, Hebrews 12, Mount Zion. How that when the day of trouble comes, we and our families are safe.

➤ There is an Intended Evil Against Us

If you look at Psalms chapter 21 today, verse 11, where we are at, one of the many things I want to point out to you is that it tells us that there is an intended evil against us. The evil that comes against you as a child of God is intended. It is not by accident. It just does not happen. **It says that there is an intended evil against us and a mischievous device against us by people who hate us.** You have got to know that going in. I told you all history is built around God moving and the devil moving to stop it. Well, your Christian life is the same way. **It is God moving in your life to do something, and the devil bringing something or somebody in to stop it.** We like to make life and the Christian life so complicated. It is really not. It just comes down to God or the devil. It's just that simple.

The great example of this structure will be found in the Old Testament with Noah. Back in Hebrews 11:7, the Bible says:

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet (the flood; it hadn't come yet), moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which (the ark) he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

That ark was his structure. God's coming judgment on planet Earth was the flood, but God was going to put Noah through the flood and his family through the flood, just like He is going to allow you and I to go through the evil day. But while everybody else died in the flood, Noah and his family were safe within the structure that he built.

➤ Building a Structure in your Life Protects Both you and your Family

Folks, I don't know what you want out of your Christian life, but I know in the day and age that we live in, you will fall, and you will fail, if you do not build a structure in your life. That structure is not only for you, but it is for your family. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago. I have seen many families in my 50-some years in the ministry. I knew the parents, I knew the kids, I knew the grandkids, it goes on back 50-some years. All through that time, it is nothing but a train wreck on a train wreck, on a train wreck, on a train wreck. One disaster after another. One heartache after the other. One problem after the other. I told you last week, one of the greatest verses in the Bible in the Old Testament is how it says that God visits the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. You see it all the time. The reason: no structure.

Yet I have to say that looking across this crowd this morning, I see you men and women that have come into this church. You were part of a train wreck. But when you got into the word of God and you saw what God had for you, you made up your mind that you were going to change trains. You turned your life around, turned your family around. You did not live in the godliness of the world, displaying your sins in front of your kids anymore. You decided to be everything that God wanted you to be and make whatever changes you had to make in life.

Noah didn't know anything about the flood. God did not come down and say, "Hey, I am going to drown everything out with a flood. It is going to rain 40 days and 40 nights." It did not even rain back in Noah's day. The earth got watered by a mist. There was no rain; there was no thunder; there were no storms. **Noah and God got together and He said, "You need to build a structure. You need to build an ark." Noah built that structure and that ark for the saving of his household and himself without even understanding what pending judgment and destruction was coming.** You and I know what is coming. You and I understand what is coming. You and I, unlike Noah, see it all around us, and we still don't do it.

➤ Amid the Storms of Life, we can have the Rest and the Peace of God

In Psalms 21, we learn how that in the midst of the storms of life, we can have the rest and the peace of God. We could never have a sermon like this without two great verses. The first one is in Isaiah 26:3.

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace, [whose] mind is stayed [on thee]: because he trusteth in thee.

The keys to that are: where your mind is at today (what it is stayed on), and the trust that you have in Him.

The other great verse is in Philippians 4:7. It says that this rest will be:

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace that passes all understanding. You cannot explain it; you cannot understand it.

V. Adam's Fall and Its Consequences

Back in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, and no matter what you know or don't know about the Bible, you know the story of Adam and Eve. God put Adam and Eve down in a garden. That garden was obviously the Garden of Eden. In that garden, they had perfect fellowship with God. In a physical sense and a spiritual sense, everything was perfect. On a spiritual side, they had fellowship with God all day. The Bible shows us that God came down walking in the cool of the day; they had Bible studies, they conversed with God, and God told them all kinds of things recorded in the first two chapters. On a physical side, there was no sickness, there was no death, no hospitals, everything was controlled weather, there were no storms, no hurricanes, no tornadoes, no wild animals, no labor or work as we know of today. All day long, they could have uninterrupted fellowship with God. This was the beginning of the physical kingdom of Heaven that God established with Adam and Eve. A physical kingdom that was put in a physical garden.

We know what happened, don't we? In Genesis chapter 3, it all comes crashing down. Now in a physical sense, the physical life on Earth will fall under a curse. Where women had no pain in childbirth, now they are going to labor. Where a man did not have to work, now by the sweat of his face, he is going to have to get his bread. All the labor of life on planet Earth now unfolds along with all the trials of life. Now we are going to have war. In just the next chapter, Genesis 4,

we have the first murder. We have famine, we have natural disasters, we have death, we have sickness, we have hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, snowstorms, rainstorms, droughts, volcanoes. Now (down the street here and right behind us), we have funeral homes.

Down in the basement of our church, just off the kitchen, is a little room back there, and if you have never seen it, we will take you on a tour of it for \$25. This church was built right after the Civil War. I do not know when the funeral homes came into being, but before they had refrigeration in the funeral homes, they used to keep the dead bodies there because it was cooler. It is not a place you want to go at midnight. Kind of creepy. In fact, when we bought this church, the guy who we bought it from, the pastor, had been here for a number of years and actually grew up in it. He said when they originally got the building 40 or 50 years ago, you could still read the word "morgue" on the door.

➤ Life is a Veil of Tears

Now funeral homes come in. People die. We have graveyards, we have hospitals, we have burn wards, and we have cancer wards for little kids. Now because of what happened in Genesis chapter 3 and the curse that came on the Earth, Adam lost fellowship with God, and he is kicked out of the Garden. Life now becomes a veil of tears. A lot of heartache today.

I think of Lynne with the passing of her daughter, Krista, whom we prayed for seven and a half years, whom many of you have ministered to, how hard that must be. I know the blessing side of that is that they are all going to be together in Heaven, as all of our loved ones who have gone home to be with the Lord, are all going to be. But you know what? Life is still a veil of tears, isn't it? A lot of heartache; a lot of disappointment. A lot of things do not go our way. A lot of times we stand there and look in the face of what we are dealing with, and we actually say, "Why God, why, why me, why us?" I will try to answer how you deal with that today. **But it starts with understanding what Adam had, and then why we have the misery we have today based on what Adam lost.**

VI. Christ Came to Restore the Image we Lost Through Adam

Once Genesis chapter 3 unfolds and we see the curse abounding down through the next centuries, and man now, who once had perfect fellowship with God in a garden physically and spiritually, is now alienated from God and has become God's enemy. But oh, how God loves His creation.

There are preachers out there today and people too who don't believe in a literal hell. The reason why they do not believe in a real hell is because they believe God is love; yes. They believe how could God ever send a man or a woman to hell? That is the whole basis of their premise. How can God who is love and a loving God send anybody to a place that is despicable and terrible like hell? How could God do that? You see, I never had that problem. My problem always was, why would God want to take somebody like me to Heaven? You know, if you knew what I knew about me this morning, you would not come and hear me preach. If I knew what you knew about you this morning, I would not come and preach to you. We are all in a mess. It is not, "How could God ever send a man to hell?" What on Earth does God want with somebody like me up in

Heaven? Most Baptist preachers, if they get to Heaven or the Golden Street, the first thing they are going to do is start chipping out the gold!

But Adam lost it; he lost the image. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Romans 5:12).*

➤ The First Coming of Christ

But then as we move into the New Testament, we find Christ's first coming to this planet. When **He came to this planet at the first coming, He came for one purpose: to restore the image that we lost through Adam.** Oh, there are a lot of ramifications. I get all that. Let's just make it for me and you today. He came down because He saw that mankind was lost and on their way to the Lake of Fire if somebody didn't do something to restore that image. So He came down, died on the cross, paid the price for your sin and for my sin. Then all man has to do is look at that cross, believe that He died for him on the cross, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." When you do that, you are saved. You are born again. You know what that really means in biblical terms? The image that Adam lost is now restored in God's fallen creation, me and you. It does not get any better than that.

Now, in the Old Testament you had a literal visible kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, and man and the nation of Israel in time completely lost the peace of God. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 4:9 that in the Old Testament, they never got the rest. It says that there is a rest for the people of God, Israel, but it was not here yet. **But for you and for me, we can now have, through that spiritual relationship with God, salvation, that perfect rest and that perfect peace and a relationship with God like Adam had before he fell.**

➤ Not Only did Adam Lose the Image of God, but he Lost the Garden of God

We teach that Adam lost the image of God and fellowship with God, and that would be true when he fell. It would also be true to say that we got back in the New Testament, in the Kingdom of God at the time of salvation, the image restored to us that Adam had and lost. That is what makes you a new creature in Christ Jesus. That is what basically makes you saved. It is not hard. It all takes place in a garden. You have got to see that. The first Adam was in a garden. He sinned in that garden and lost the image. The second Adam was in the same garden with the same temptation; He prayed through in the garden. Where Adam was denied the Tree of Life, the Second Adam became the Tree of Life. And we got our image restored. Not complicated.

But what most of God's people fail to see today is that not only did Adam lose the image of God, but Adam lost the Garden of God also. He is kicked out. But in the New Testament, this is where the peace of God really exists. Without you understanding what I am about to say and understanding how it fits into your life, you will never have it. **Not only do we get the image restored to us, spiritually speaking, but we get the garden restored to us, spiritually speaking too.** I mean, come on. Did you ever stop and look at the Garden of Eden and all that story back there and ever wonder what it really means to you and me? You think it just meant

something to Adam? You think there is no spiritual significance to it? You think God just put a garden down there and said, "Okay, Adam, you are in it," and that was it? You think it means nothing to me and you in our relationship with Christ today? Really? You really think that?

VII. A Garden: The Real Key to our Rest and Perfect Peace Amid the Storms

What we fail to see today is that Adam lost not only the image, but he lost the garden. We not only get the image back, but we get the garden back too, spiritually speaking. Here is the real key to our rest, our perfect peace in the midst of the storms: It is a garden.

If you would look down through chapter 21, verses 1 through 7, there are seven things that are missing in most of God's people's lives today.

1. The first one he talks about is there in verse 1, **the joy of God's salvation**. There is no joy in people's lives today. God's people walk around like they have been baptized in dill pickle juice. Are you kidding me? They are the most miserable, angry, bitter, resentful people you ever met in your life. They get their nose bent out of joint over the smallest little thing; there is no joy in God's salvation. When you have joy in God's salvation, real joy in God's salvation will override the stupid things in life that you get your nose bent out of shape for.
2. The second one in verse 1: **joy in God's strength**. The strength that we have in God produces the joy that no matter what we have got to face, you do not have to face it in your strength. Your strength will always fail you. My strength will always fail me. The very strongest, toughest guys on this planet, the greatest men in the Bible, all fell to the devil when they tried to do it in their own strength. You have got to take joy in God's strength.
3. Then he says a third thing in verse 2: **God giving us the desires of our heart**. Really? How many of God's people have the desires of their heart today? I mean, you move in and shack up with somebody, is that the desire of your heart? You do drugs, or you drink, or you smoke, or you do this or that. Is that really the desire of your heart; really? How many of God's people really have the desire from God in their heart? How many of God's people even know how to get it? That would be a good question for Thursday night Bible study.
4. Number four also in verse 2: **God granting the request of our lips**. Though there are some legitimate things that you can ask God for, but God granting those things is based on the first three.
5. The fifth thing is in verse 3: **the blessings of goodness**. Blessings forever. Somebody wrote a song once, which I think is a great song. It is a simple little song, without much theology in it, but it is a great practical song: "Count your blessings, see what God has done. Count your blessings, name them one by one." If the average Christian today, who claims to be saved, had to sit down and make a list of the blessings in their life while their kids are out in the world, with their lives all screwed up and messed up, with everything upside down; it would be a short list. Why? No structure, why? No perception, why? No position, why? No purpose. And no rest.
6. In verse 7, he says the sixth thing is **a steadfastness**. That is being unmovable. The number one thing in the child of God's life, once they get to a mature place, needs to be steadfastness.

Nobody can talk you out of what you believe. At that point, when you have steadfastness, you not only know what you believe, but you know why you believe it. This is going to be the essence of our *Iron Sharpening Iron*. Taking you young guys and you young gals and fine tuning you like a special forces soldier. When he goes into battle, he takes out that blade of a knife and he is honing it on a stone, getting it as sharp as he can, because he knows he is going into battle, and he wants that knife to be able to cut through whatever he has got to cut through with it. That is what we want for you. We want your edge so sharp that you can cut through anything that the devil throws at you—steadfastness.

7. Then the seventh one in verse 3; **a crown of gold upon our head**. Need I even tell you what that one is? Judgment Seat of Christ. The fulfillment of our Christian life.

Why do so many of God's people not have these? I believe they are saved. Now, if you are a young Christian here or maybe you have been in a church for all your life and you never got any Bible, I will give you that. I am talking about people who have been saved 30, 40, 50 years and have been in the Bible. Where are these found? How do you find them?

VIII. Two Key Books to Help us Build the Right Relationship with Christ: Song of Solomon & Ephesians

I do not know how much you know about the book of Song of Solomon. God put two key books in your Bible to help you and me build the right relationship with Christ. Both are basically unknown today. The first one is in the New Testament and that would be the book of Ephesians. **The book of Ephesians is so valuable because it shows you the start of the church and really breaks up the structure of the church for you.** The second book will be the book of Song of Solomon in the Old Testament. **Where the book of Ephesians gives you the structure of the church, the book of Song of Solomon lays out the fellowship of the church with Christ.** For you and for me as the child of God, the bride of Christ, the Song of Solomon will be the most intimate book in the Bible.

➤ Song of Solomon

Solomon writes Song of Solomon. When you study Solomon's life, it is called the Song of Songs, Song Singular of Songs Plural. In 1 Kings 11:3, as you open this up a little bit, it tells us that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. That is a thousand women. As he goes through all these women, out of all the women who he met, he only found one who had the virtue that became the virtuous woman who he wrote about in Proverbs chapter 31. He says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." He is talking about the one woman that he found. Out of a thousand women, he only found one who had the virtue that set her apart from the rest.

Solomon is a type of Christ, and he is one of the 21 types of Christ in the Old Testament. I would say, and I have thought this for many years, that today in Christianity, based on the model of a thousand women and only one virtuous and him a type of Christ, it is most likely in Christianity, you give me any given 1,000 Christians, and there will only be one out of that thousand who has

the virtue, who has the right fellowship. Incredible. You say, "Well, I do not think you are right." You hope I am not right, but the pattern is clear.

A number of years ago, on New Year's Eve, I did a chapter by chapter, verse by verse layout of the book of Song of Solomon. We started about 6:30 or so and went to about 10:00 or maybe 11:00; four plus hours. We broke the book down completely. It's still on the website. The reason I did that is because at that point, as we were building our church and we were building people, **I remember telling you that without an understanding of the book Song of Solomon, there will be no real fellowship with God.** It will all be an illusion in our mind. There will be no peace, there will be no real fellowship **because the book gives us understanding of what a real biblical relationship with God has to be.**

I do not know if you have ever seen this or not, but in the book of Song of Solomon, he breaks it down into two aspects.

- One aspect, he takes an enormous amount of time as the Bridegroom, Solomon, i.e., Christ, looking at the Bride, i.e., you and me, and goes into a great elaborate description of her, telling us what He feels for her, how much He loves her, how much He cannot be away from her, how much He is waiting to be with her, and He goes on and on and on wanting His Bride and telling that Bride how much He loves her and cannot stand not to be with her. That is the first aspect.
- The second aspect is the Bride back to the Husband, Christ. She goes into incredible detail about what He looks like, all of His attributes, how she loves Him, how she cannot live without Him, how she wakes up in the nighttime thinking about Him, wanting to be with Him, cannot live without Him. I mean she goes on and on.

That book is the most intimate book in your Bible that shows you and me when Christ looks at you, what He thinks and what He feels. When you look at Christ, how you should look at Him and what you should feel.

➤ Song of Solomon takes Place in a Garden – A Picture of Fellowship

You know what? Here it comes. **The whole book takes place in the setting of a garden.** How about that. Did you ever notice that? Adam lost the garden and God's fellowship, but we get the fellowship back through the same garden that he lost physically, but we get it spiritually.

The whole book, as I told you, is just broken down in two key sections. Him looking at me, how much He loves me. Me looking back at Him, how much I love Him. There is the relationship. If Song of Solomon is not on the very heartstrings of your heart as you look at Him, you are wasting your time. No peace. The whole book is in a context of a garden.

In Song of Solomon 5:1, he says, "*I am come into **my garden.***"

In Song of Solomon 4:12, "***A garden** inclosed [is] my sister, [my] spouse.*"

When you go into Song of Solomon 4:13, "*Thy **plants [are] an orchard** of pomegranates, with **pleasant fruits.***"

Song of Solomon 4:15, "***A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters.***"

Song of Solomon 4:16, "*Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon **my garden**, [that] the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his **garden**, and eat his **pleasant fruits.***"

I mean, look at it. In the garden, there will be the Rose of Sharon, lilies in the valley—garden, apple tree—garden, fig tree—garden, grapes—garden, pomegranate—garden, honey and honeycomb—garden. Song of Solomon 4:13 says, "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard." Song of Solomon 6:2 says, "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." **That is fellowship.**

➤ The Pleasant Smell of God's Garden in My Life

Now maybe it makes sense, guys, whenever your wife gets mad at you or you have a special day, you go to the florist and get her some flowers...from a garden. She will not bring you flowers; she will get you a new shotgun, a new dog, or a new boat. But she wants flowers. Because those flowers represent what has been broken between you two. You do not even know that. You buy her a box of candy; she feeds it to the dog!

Oh, the pleasant smell of God's garden in my life, spiritually speaking, versus the stench of this old world. He says there, "Awake, O north wind, blow upon my garden." North is Heaven, wind is the Holy Spirit of God. **It is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God, blowing that smell of that beautiful fragrance of that garden across my life that masks the stench of this old world.**

Years and years ago we went to Hawaii, and we took a dinner cruise. It was off the coast there about, oh, I don't know, a mile maybe. You could sit out there in the pleasant air, the breeze was blowing, and you could actually smell the fragrance of the flowers off the Hawaiian beach there as the wind blew it out over to where we were sitting. I thought to myself, that is exactly like this.

IX. The Peace of God and the Rest God Gives us only comes out of the Garden of God in our Lives

➤ At Salvation you get the Image Back but not the Garden

You see, man lost the image. When you got saved, you got the image back. But you did not get the garden back. **Now, it is only in this garden that you find the peace and rest that God has for us.** Adam had it physically, but we got it spiritually. A garden in the eye of a storm. God's

people have missed it today completely. This is why there is no peace, there is no rest. This is why when the tough times are going to come, what is going to carry you through?

Just like when you and your wife have a little spat, if you have a normal relationship, and she is a little mad, upset, because you did something stupid, and it is usually us guys, let us be honest. On the way home from work, you stop and get a bouquet of flowers. As mad as she may be, you are not going to tell me that unless you just killed the dog or ran over the cat, that those flowers aren't going to break it down a little bit and make things a little more workable together in a relationship. I don't care what you go through in life. I don't care how tough it is in that evil day.

When you walk hand in hand with Him through His garden, and you look at all His fruit, and you look at all the blessings and the desires of your heart and all the things that He has given you in His garden that the world can never give you, it will be okay. It will be okay.

➤ God Intended for us to Live in a Garden

Now you need to understand this, and the Bible is very clear about this, God's form of life intended for us on planet Earth, from the very beginning, was a garden, Genesis chapters 2 and 3. It never was a city. I mean, if you know anything about your Bible, in Genesis 4:17, the first city was started by a murderer, Cain. The whole world that we have today, and we lose sight of this, survives by what comes out of a garden, out of a farm. I mean, you may have the biggest cities in the world, but you cannot eat asphalt. It takes a farm; it takes a garden. Why, even back in Genesis chapter 4, when Cain brought the wrong sacrifice, the Bible tells you that it was the fruit of the ground. The ground produces the fruit.

➤ God Intends for us to Bear Fruit

Israel brought forth Physical Fruit.

In the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 26:1-11, we find that when Israel did their harvest of all the things that they grew, it was an offering of the first fruits: wheat, pomegranates, barley, olives, grapes, dates, figs. There were seven of them. Those were the first fruits that came from Israel's garden. This was the garden of the Kingdom of Heaven, literal fruit, literal garden. They raised it up and they brought the first fruit to the Lord literally. "Here, Lord, this is Yours, Your fruit."

We bring forth Spiritual Fruit.

But you and I have a garden spiritually. Though theirs was physical, and they brought forth physical fruit, yours and mine is a spiritual garden. We bring forth spiritual fruit. You see, a garden is maintained for the purpose of bringing forth fruit.

In Genesis 2:15, physically speaking, when God put **Adam** down in the garden, he was told to dress it and to keep it. He cultivated the garden to bring forth fruit. In Genesis 9:20, as soon as **Noah** got out of the ark, the first thing he did was he planted a vineyard, a garden. When God established the **nation of Israel**, Kingdom of Heaven, all literal stuff, they were to be a fruitful nation and bear fruit unto God.

Ezekiel 36:8 says, "But ye, O mountains [of] Israel, [ye] shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel." And in Matthew 21:34, when He gives the whole analogy of Israel and how they got into the mess they got in, and how God began to deal with them, He says in that verse, "when the time of the fruit drew near." Israel was the first fruit among other nations. Israel's fruit was a physical fruit. Israel's fruit was the nations that God gave them through the nation of Israel that they could bring the knowledge of God and produce fruit for God in those nations. All that was the Kingdom of Heaven. All that was Israel literally bringing forth fruit to the people on Earth that they might have God in a relationship and find God.

Ah, but for you and me, it is different, is it not? Spiritually it is. In the Church Age, the Kingdom of God, and in our lives, as we have a relationship with God, like the Song of Solomon says, our spiritual garden, we too produce fruit. Because 1 Corinthians 3:9 says, "ye are God's husbandry," you take care of the garden. In Galatians 5:22-23, we find nine fruits that ought to come out of your spiritual garden. Oh, they are in the Bible, but they are only in the Bible to show you that they are called the fruit of the Spirit. They are spiritual fruit in your life, in your garden with Song of Solomon, as you love Him and He loves you, and that relationship produces fruit.

➤ Relationships Produce Fruit

Hey, we have a lot of couples here that have babies. Now, I know I do not have to explain this to you. This is not a birds and the bees sermon, but you have kids through an intimate relationship. You enter into something that God designed called marriage. Through that institution that God designed, you have two people who love each other. Through that love relationship, there is intimacy. In time, the intimacy of the husband and wife physically will bring forth fruit. They are over in the nursery. Spiritually speaking, when you become intimate spiritually with the Lord Jesus Christ, Song of Solomon, your intimacy is not physical, your intimacy is in a spiritual relationship called fellowship. In time, you too will produce fruit.

You see, soul winning is not a program. It's not you getting a thousand books, a thousand cassettes, or Mr. Soul winner claiming, "Out of 10 people you talk to, I will show you how to win eight of them to the Lord." Yeah, and most of them will not really be saved. **You know what real soul winning is? It is you and the Lord, Bride and the Bridegroom, through an intimate spiritual relationship that produces fruit.** Just that simple. Not complicated at all. It is only complicated because we want it to be complicated.

Nine fruit of the Holy Spirit of God: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. How many of God's people do you know who have all those nine things in their life? He did not say you just have one or two of them, it is okay. **He did not say "fruits of the Spirit." He said, "fruit of the Spirit." You know why? Because they all come in one body through the relationship you have with Christ. They will come out of a spiritual relationship with Christ as we fellowship spiritually in the garden.**

➤ There is Peace and Rest in the Garden

There is a song in our hymnal that we sing every once in a while, "I Come to the Garden Alone." That is where you and Christ really have your relationship. If I did not have a place to go, in this godless, putrefying world that smells like the stench of the bottomless pit, if I as a child of God did not have some place to go to get out of that mess, out of that stench, out of that filth, out of the problems you have got to deal with people who are up to that filth and ungodliness to their eyeballs, I would lose my mind. The only escape you have, when the world comes crashing down around us, the day of trouble comes and everybody is falling apart, the only escape you have is to gather your family around you and head into that garden. There is the peace. There is the rest. There is everything that we need. **In time, once we have the nine fruit of the Spirit of God in our lives because of the garden and that garden is bearing fruit spiritually, in time we produce the fruit of our labors and the people we bring to Christ.**

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain.

This is why so many of God's people, good people, not a criticism, it is just a fact, have been saved 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years and never won a soul to Christ and have the delusion that they have a relationship. Well, maybe you do, but it is not in the garden.

Just like in life, all life will come from a garden. In our Christian life, life will come, spiritual life, from our garden in Song of Solomon and our fellowship with Christ, spiritually speaking.

➤ Why God's People Struggle in Their Christian Lives

There lies the reason why God's people struggle so much in their Christian lives. They get saved and they get the fallen image that Adam lost back, but they never get the garden back. No garden will be no fruit, no rest, no peace under the storms of life. We, just like that little mouse, that little rat in the maze, bumping our head up against the walls of life till we magically get to the cheese at the end of the road.

Bearing fruit is more than just soul winning in that garden. You moms and dads, you cultivate that garden like Adam did. You are the husbandman of the garden. Spiritually speaking, God gives you fruit; it's the kids that you have. You bring them into the garden. I know this is boring to some of you. I don't know what to tell you other than wait until the Judgment Seat of Christ, if you even get there. It is more than soul winning. It is the garden that you bring your family to. It is the garden you do your work from. People say, "Well, I want to work from home." I do not care about working from home, but you ought to work from the garden. It is where you find the desires of your heart. The desires of your heart are not what you want in life. **It is in the garden with the fellowship through Song of Solomon, you find out what His desires are and you make His heart your heart and His desires become your desires. Now you have the life of blessing with God.**

I think the greatest example of that is the church that God has given us here. We are nobody from nowhere. Yet God has taken this little church around the world. God has impacted people's lives

across this country, everywhere. It is all because of the fact that we maintain the garden. My job is to get as many of you into that garden as I can.

We took the kids to camp and tried to work with them and get them going. We want to get them into the garden. Unfortunately, many of them are probably a long way from the garden now because mom and dad dropped the ball. You young singles, iron sharpened with iron. We want to show you the garden. It is never too early to start the garden. We are going up to Boston in a couple of weeks. We are going to show them the garden. Some of you are going to New York—going to get to see the garden. **The peace of God and the rest God gives us only comes out of the garden of God in our lives.**

X. The Progression by which you get to the Peace and the Rest of God Through the Structure and the Garden

Turn over to Psalms 37 and then I am going to be done here. Psalms 37 shows you the progression by which you get to the peace and the rest of God through the structure and through the garden.

*Psalms 37:1-7 **Fret not** thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*

*2. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb (**there is the day of trouble for us**).*

*3. **Trust in the LORD**, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

*4. **Delight thyself also in the LORD**; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

*5. **Commit thy way unto the LORD**; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

6. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

*7. **Rest in the LORD**, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man that bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

Five little concepts. I will leave you with this. In the garden, in the structure, through the book of Song of Solomon, there are going to be some evil days, but Psalms 37 says:

- Verse 1, Fret not
- Verse 3, then you trust in the Lord.
- Verse 4, next step, you delight thyself also in the Lord.
- Verse 5, next step, you commit thy way unto the Lord. **Notice it did not say commit your life. Did you see that? It said commit your way, everything about you.**

Once you fret not, trust in the Lord, delight thyself, commit thy way.

- Verse 7, then you rest in the Lord.

That is the key. **The key to resting is putting these five things in your life through your garden.** Everybody who is saved got the image back. The question is, did you get your garden back?

XI. Summary

Now when you have the restored image and you have the restored garden, then verses 8 through 13 will take place.

*Psalms 21:8-13. Thine hand shall **find out all thine enemies**: thy right hand shall **find out those that hate thee**.*

*9. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: **the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath**, and the fire shall devour them.*

*10. **Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth**, and their seed from among the children of men.*

*11. **For they intended evil against thee**: they imagined a mischievous device, [which] **they are not able to [perform]**.*

12. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, [when] thou shalt make ready [thine arrows] upon thy strings against the face of them.

13. Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: [so] will we sing and praise thy power.

- Verse 8 says, you will know who your enemies are. God will show you who you've got to watch out for. It will show you who your enemies are. It will show you who your friends are, but it will also show you who your enemies are who claim to be your friends.
- Verse 9 says, God will swallow them up in His wrath.
- Verse 10 says, their fruit shall be destroyed from off the Earth.
- Verse 12 says, the arrows from the hand of God will turn them back.
- Verse 11 says, their intended evil against you will not be able to be performed.

The rest we have in the midst of the storm, the tornadoes of life. We are in the eye of the peace of the storm which is in a garden found in Song of Solomon, where He tells you explicitly when Christ looks at you, what does He see? What does He feel? When you look at Him, what you should see and what you should feel. Unbelievable! The intimacy of a relationship with Christ in the garden. That will produce fruit in the day of trouble.