

It really becomes richer, doesn't it? When you share it with someone else. Have I got anybody else? I got one little sister here out of those nine. Is that all I'm going to get? All these people are not going to believe a word I say. Well, then I'm going to testify for myself. If I can't get any of these other people to testify, just rain on every one of you. The difference, and probably most of my time is alone, but the difference of my being alone and with someone else is at least tenfold difference. And some of the things that happen, and in my insight of the Lord, when I go to be with the Lord...

Let me just tell you something. A meeting. Would you like to hear about a meeting? Try one this way. When you have learned to go to your Lord in this rich way, those of you who are in little groups, when this is nailed down in your life, do this. Have everyone arise on Monday morning alone with a particular passage of scripture. On Tuesday morning, have everybody get together in twos. Same thing, same passage of scripture. On Wednesday, make it fours. Thursdays, make it in eights. And Friday, make it sixteens. And then have a meeting Saturday night, and watch the roof blow up with so much to be shared by the Lord's people.

Brothers and sisters, the Christian life was never made for you as an individual. It was made for the body of Christ. Never forget it, and like Abraham, pursue it the rest of your life. You'll never know Him as well alone as you will know Him within the context of the body of Christ. Now, I have given you all something to do tomorrow morning. We're going to meet back here tomorrow morning at 9:30; this is going to be a workshop meeting. I hope I can get you out of here by 11:00. To a certain degree, this depends on you. I think I'd like to pray.

What shall we say to You? That we have met brothers and sisters, that we have fallen in love with part of You, with part of You. Lord. We have been amazed again at Your infinite grace. We have joyed spontaneously. We have loved spontaneously. We've been at home. We've been at home, Lord. And for that we know....

I don't know who started the simple matter of taking scripture and turning it to prayer, but whoever it is, we owe them a debt of gratitude. Jeanne Guyon wrote a book that flew into the face of Roman Catholic teachings. I've already told you that they taught that it took a lifetime to go into meditation, contemplation, and what they call union, and that would only happen a few times in a person's life, and only to a very rare group. She had the audacity to produce a book entitled *A Short and Simple Method of Prayer*, and this was outrageous, and what she presented, by the way, I don't know if you've ever read the book, and it's a classic. There's never been a better book written practically. I hope there will be AGD (After Gene's Death). By the way, this is one of those AGD messages. It's not being taped. He is doing it, but I own that tape. I'll take that home with me, and I'll put it in the AGD file.

She just took this idea of opening the scripture and turning it to prayer. Now, that's as far as her book went. I have been told that there's something that she's written, and I probably read it, but I didn't even notice it, that she talked about a deeper experience that she had with the Lord than what she has recorded there in the use of the Scripture. I have never verified that that's the truth. I

think Frank Laubach probably touched something too that most of the people who've read his little book miss. By the way, I don't know if you know this or not, but I met Dr. Laubach when I was a kid and his son taught me to write, taught me to write for illiterates, and semi-literates, one summer in Nashville, Tennessee at a seminar and he was young and we were young and when Helen and I were about to get married, we asked Dr. Laubach to perform our wedding, and so he united us, and it was not too long after that he passed away.

Actually, I can't tell you of anything else in print today that is going to benefit you beyond her little book, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*, a short and simple method of prayer. It was and has been for me years of great spiritual help to open the scripture and turn it to prayer. Now, let me just stop there and move over to somewhere else. I have sought from the covenant within me to never preach what I have not experienced. And one of the things that you never hear anybody preaching about at all, in fact, a lot of people live and die and never hear the subject, including many ministers, and that is this business of oneness with Christ. What are some other terms that have been used to describe that? Union with Christ, a term that is getting a little bit under derision, I'm afraid, these days because of the Union Life people, and I cannot figure out what those people believe, and I don't think, and if you're a member of them, I don't think you know either. I don't think anybody knows. I don't think they know.

Anyway, there is union. There's oneness. There's being in Christ, abiding in Christ. I don't know any other terms than that, do you? Rarely touched on because it's never, it's almost never reported as an experience. And I wondered about that. I just wondered and wondered and wondered about that: the business of knowing experientially.

In Santa Barbara, California. I asked a group of Christians, young people to go with me to a large, beautiful place called Ellen Cantal, which means the song, I believe. And they had these apartments out in this beautiful 10, 15, 20-acre place, and we spent the weekend there. Something was in me, something had already been touched by me, either in my spirit, I don't know exactly where, but I knew there was something. I knew there was something. And I sat down with these young people, out on the lawn, and I said, "I've got to go to a meeting, but I want you to do something." And I gave them a little assignment. And I told them to pair off. Now, all of these people were well-versed for years in getting up with the Lord early in the morning, turning passages of scripture into prayer very quietly...very, very quietly. We were an unusual group of people in this way. We were very quiet in our praying and very robust and verbose in our worship. We had some Pentecostals come in once and spend the weekend with us. They were very verbose in their praying, very quiet in their worship. We couldn't get together. We were like ships passing in the night. They were terrified of our meetings, and we were terrified of their praying.

I left those young people there; they were probably in their early 20s, most of them, with this simple little assignment, and I went back and was speaking to the rest of the church. And at the close of the meeting, the brothers and sisters who had been up there at that retreat walked in, and they all looked like they had seen a ghost. They just came in and sat down, and they didn't

have much to say. And I shall never forget that young girl named Christy Thollander; in fact, I don't even know if she was Christy Thollander yet, as she might have been Christy Porsche. She came up, her eyes were as big as saucers, and she said, "You can't imagine what happened to us." Later, I divided the church into three groups, and we all went up with the next group and the next group. We all got into this, and a young lady named Sandy Emery summed it up when she said - and this was way back in the beginning - she said, "There's a whole realm out there for us to explore." And I remember that very first time for me; I'll tell you exactly how I felt. I felt like I had stuck my head up through a cloud, looked around, and found a universe I did not know existed. That's the way I felt. It is quite an incredible first encounter.

Now, I remember one young lady was really sullen and sulky in all of this. Nothing in the world got to her. She didn't have the foggiest idea what anybody was talking about; it missed her completely. Oh, she was really angry. She didn't know what was going on. About a year later, she came to my home one night and told me the most remarkable, goosebump-producing, spine-tingling, thrilling, awesome story imaginable. And she was radiant and dumbfounded. And you know why I told you that? So that you will not be discouraged.

Well, I asked you to have some time this morning with someone with Psalm 23. Do you remember that? Now, let me see. It's okay if you didn't; I'm very tolerant. Why, I'm almost as tolerant as the Lord Himself. And He is incredibly tolerant. No, I'm not almost as tolerant as the Lord, am I, honey (laughter). Anyway, I'm very patient with the Lord's people, and I expect a certain amount of slothfulness and laziness. Alright. Reprehensible conduct.

Those of you who have met before meeting with someone, would you just slip your hand up really quickly? I want to see how many we have here. Do we have a representative number at all? Okay. Did you meet with someone this morning? Okay. Alright. I really need your cooperation. If you've got anything to report, would you report it to us right now? Have you got something to say? Do you have something to tell us?

Audience: I have meditated on the 23rd Psalm for quite some time, but today I'm turning to it with Jesus and the Lord and bringing in the Holy Spirit. It was exciting. I can't wait to go through more, and I have had the experience of being in the other realm.

It doesn't become a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Yeah. Yes, brother Larry.

Audience: The impact of it is just incredible when you realize all of the vital, important elements within Psalm 23 that are necessary for you to go through in order to go higher. Very difficult.

Yes, you sometimes touch very painful things as well as very glorious things. That's right, you can find yourself in tears. Okay. Anybody else? This is the kind of thing that I was looking for, not the sharing tonight. Yes, dear.

Audience: I found for myself when I went through it that the Father was speaking to me as I was speaking to Him, that the Son and the Father are saying the same in our relationship, really.

Praise the Lord. That's wonderful. Great. Okay. Anybody else? I'm going to go over here. Yes, sister. And what is your name? Okay, Linda, I'm having a hard time. That's because my daughter's name and I'm blanking out on you...

What about those of you who took Psalm three? Do y'all have anything to report at all? Did any of you rewrite it? Let's talk about the rewriting part; I won't press you on the other. I see people reaching...you don't have to reach for Psalm 3. You got anything to say at all? Oh, really? You did? Well, well, then perhaps you missed the point. Maybe his father was telling him about what He was facing. You know, maybe not. Alright. Yes.

Father, many are against me and saying that You cannot deliver me, but You're my shield and Protector. You glorify me and exalt me. I can turn only to you, and you answer me from Your throne in the heavenlies, for You are King of all things. Give me rest and peace in Your protection and provision in the awareness of Your presence. His writing is not easy to follow. I know You will destroy all my enemies and deliver me. Father, bless those You have given me. Alright. Good. Wonderful. Now, what to do with something like that? We need those ten weeks together. I realize I gave you a difficult assignment, and I wish that we would have had an evening together on that first. I'm going to tell you something. Those of you who were with this, I recognize Art's problem, and it is a genuine problem. I'm always learning from the church. And the church has taught me, not out of my personal experience, but someone else's, an incredible way to deal with the Psalms that I don't think I would have ever known if someone else had not shown me. And we'll not have any opportunity to get into that this weekend. We're almost out of time.

I'm going to take you through phase three. Now, we're going to look at Psalm 23 from a new viewpoint. Before we do, there are two things, two words. You're just going to have to take a little leap of faith here and trust. You've heard this phrase your whole life, "in Christ", have you not? Are you in Him? Yes. Are you part of Him? I believe that will shake up no one's theology. Yes, you're part of the body of Christ. And even one verse in Corinthians refers to the church as a part of the Lord Himself. So, there is an "in Christ"; we just don't ever think about putting ourselves there. We do positionally, but the actual putting of ourselves there.

Now, let's hear another term that we've heard all of our lives, and no one has ever given us a good explanation for it. No one ever gave us a handle on this one. "Praying in the Name" and to "Pray in My Name." Alright, let's forget about that one and come back to this one, "Being in Christ," and let's listen to the Lord Himself speak. Psalms 23 belongs to Him. This is not you speaking. It is not me speaking. It is Christ speaking. This morning, when you rose and got with someone, you said, "Lord Jesus, the Father is Your Shepherd." Did you not? Or you said, "Father, You shepherded the Lord Jesus when He was on earth." Or something like that. You're following me. You stepped out of the picture, but you spoke to the Father, or you spoke to the Son. I really recommend that as a part of your relationship to Christ the rest of your life. And it's just really wonderful and marvelous. And if you don't ever go any further than that, it will still be cataclysmic. It's sure a long way from God bless Mama, Daddy, and Uncle Joe, our church, and bless us. I want

you to listen to the way the typical Christian prays. This is about as far as it goes, and this kind of weekend can transform your prayer life. Typical American Christian, North American Christian. “Lord, we thank You, Lord, that You, Lord, are with us, Lord, today, Lord, because Lord, we're so grateful, Lord, that You've saved us, Lord, and helped us, Lord, and You're helping us and help us now, Lord. We need Your help, Lord. Lord, if You don't help us, Lord, You've got to help us. Help us, Lord. And we thank You for being here today, Lord. And for all the good people here today, Lord, and our brothers, Lord, and our sisters, Lord. Amen, Lord.”

Now, have I exaggerated? I have not exaggerated. The only thing is I have underexaggerated because very often he's really praying this way. “Lord, we thank You, Lord, that You, Lord, are here, Lord. And we thank You that we are all here, Lord. And we thank You for Your help, Lord, and You're our help, Lord. And thank You. And amen, Lord.” And he's going at 90 miles an hour, afraid God's going to catch up with him. I know this is true. I've been listening to prayer. By the way, Ros Rinker's little book, *Prayer Conversing with God*, is really the only book I know in the English language other than that little book right up there to recommend to you. And it'll teach you how to speak in Anglo-Saxon English to God, and He understands that almost as well as he does the King James version. All right, we're going to leave. We're going to leave the brother who's saying, “Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord,” and we're going to leave, when you put yourself in here and say, “Lord, You're my Shepherd. I sure do need you. What do you mean, I don't ever want?” And yes, and this morning, “Father, You are the Lord's Shepherd, Lord Jesus, when you were on the earth, He you never wanted.” What an exalted way to deal with God, to sit there and praise Him and thank Him and tell Him what a wonderful Son He has and to tell the Son what a wonderful Father He has. Isn't that glorious? Now let us step inside of Christ and let us move to an eternal place where we are not, or if we are, we are lost in Him. And let us listen to the reality of this prayer.

Do you remember that all things that are real are in the other realm? And that He gives His spirit without measure, and that you and I have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places that are in Christ, and they've been given to us by our Father. You will not find me in this prayer, for I have stepped in; I have taken my rightful place in Christ.

Father, You are my Shepherd. I have no needs. I am at rest in You. Father, I drink of You there. I drink of You here. Father, You keep my soul. You are my path of righteousness. I face this day to glorify Your name and all this day wherever I walk. You'll be my path, my righteousness, my God. You have glorified my name. My Father, I glorify Your name. Death's shadow will fall upon me today in this place, this dreadful place. But I am not afraid, for You are in me. You have surrounded me, and I am in You. I will lean on You as my staff, and You will protect me with Your rod. This day is Yours, and I am going to feast on You today, Father. And I'm going to live by You this day. And my enemy will rage because You are my banquet. I am Your anointed one, and my spirit overflows with You. As long as I am on this earth, Your love and Your goodness is following me. And Father, I'm dwelling in You. And I look forward to the day when I return to You from whence I come, and I will dwell there forever and ever. Amen.

Now, that's my Lord's witness to His Father. Now, the blackboard's been moved, but now, where did that take place? Where did that take place? It may have taken place on earth in Galilee somewhere. It may have taken place before the creation of the world, in anticipation of His coming here. I want to help you here if I may. A few months ago, Discover magazine put it on the front of their cover...I don't know if any of you saw this magazine, or this particular cover, but it was the most interesting cover. It had these words on it. "One Way", and under it, this symbol. Can you see that? "One Way" and under it was this statement: We can all remember our past, but according to Einstein's theory of relativity, we should be able to remember the future, and there is no scientific explanation as to why we cannot remember the future. And there was a seven-page article thereafter in which scientists from all over the world, the most brilliant scientists in astrophysics, tried to explain and come up with a theory why we cannot remember the future, and they don't know why we cannot remember the future. That sounds dumb to us that we couldn't, but according to Einstein, we should be free to remember the future. Maybe we can't, but if Einstein's theory says we should be able to, does it not follow that God could remember the future? And in a way, that's kind of what I've been talking to you a lot about this whole weekend.

My Lord not only remembers it; He's been there. I like to move around inside Christ. I like to get inside of Him and move around. And this may not have a lot of meaning to you here until you do this; do it with another Christian - both of you get inside of Christ and go to the end of the ages. Stand at the last moment that will ever be. The only thing beyond it is eternity. Stand in the presence of that throng if you wish and listen to Jesus Christ give this crescendo of glory and praise to His Father.

Father, You were my shepherd. In all eternity and in all my time on earth, I never once had a need. Father, You are the greenness of my life; you never withered. You were my drink. You were my food. Father, You restored and protected my soul. You guided me in your own path to Your glory. Father, you did it. Death has passed. The valley is gone. There is no evil. There is only You. You may put away Your rod. Father, put away the staff. You have become comfort to me and to my redeemed. The enemy is gone; there's nothing left but the banquet table, and I and all of mine are anointed with You. Our cup has become our Father. You are goodness. You are loving kindness. The days have ended. Now, the loving kindness and goodness that is You, Father, is now our life. We have come to the end. I am going back into You. I am bringing in all the redeemed. Father, I am coming back into My house. You are my house, and now You shall be All in All. Father, I am coming back from whence I came, bringing the great parade of the redeemed within me. We shall dwell in You forever and forever and forever. Amen. Hallelujah.

That'll beat any prayer you'll ever pray. You do that sometimes with a brother, with a sister. Just stand in Christ. Go to the end of time and allow Your Lord to praise Your Father. Do not think you will not hear such an anthem of glory. One day, you will be there when He exalts His Father as the Father has exalted Him. Now then, here are some assignments. One thing I want to say to you is, please don't get hung up on verses in the New Testament or the Old that you cannot handle. If you can't handle it, go over it. Just skip it. I'm going to take Psalm three for just a moment. Let's

see what I can do with this. And I haven't looked at it, and I hadn't planned to do this. Brother Art has raised a challenge here for me. Yes. Oh, absolutely, Art. Absolutely. Art, this teaches me, this teaches me.

Father, my adversaries have increased. They rose against me. They said You would not deliver me, but Father, You were my shield. You lifted my head with Your glory. You heard me out of Your throne, and I rested in You, and Lord, I rose from the grave, and You were that which sustained me. I have not been afraid, and I will never be afraid. No matter what it is that has set itself against me or the people that You have given me. Father, You have arisen, and I have arisen in You. You have smitten my enemies. You have scattered them. Salvation belongs to me, and I shall bless Your people.

Glory. You've got to know where to put it, brother. Don't get caught in time and space. If that won't work in the past, move it to the future. If it won't work in the future, move it to the present. It won't work in the present; move it to the resurrection. You'll find it, somewhere you'll find your Lord in there exalting His Father. Have you noticed how little space we give to our Father in the Christian faith? And it's not because we don't want to; it's because we don't know how to, and we're just not that close to Him. We feel much more comfortable with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, is that not true? I believe for most of us, that's true, but when we dare to step into Him, then we find how incredibly close He is to His Father.

Now, I want to just tell you one thing before I give you these little assignments, and that is, this has been the experience of so many, and this is not something that I started telling people; this is something people started telling me, and that is, you'll meet someone else there besides the Father and the Son. Some of these days, you're going to meet somebody else out there. There's not supposed to be anyone else out there but Him, but you'll meet someone out there. She'll show up one of these days. You'll just discover the Lord Jesus sometimes talking to His bride. Now then, I made a statement to you, and that statement was that you will never have an experience, but what Jesus Christ had first. I'm going to talk a little bit about that closely.

Here's one of the things I want you to do. If we're looking for assignments, I would like you to purchase the book, 'The Autobiography of Jesus Christ'. It's Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John put together, blended as one, and written in the first person. That'll take care of four books in the New Testament. The Autobiography of Jesus Christ. You take that book and you find John 7, 8, 9, and 10, and you just start moving that around. You'll hear the Lord talking to the Father in Galilee or in Judea, but you just take that and move it to eternity somewhere. Read it. Try to stay out of the reading of the Gospels. You read the Gospels, and you start reading about...and if they take your coat, give them the cloak also. And if he says go one mile, go two. And you say how am I going to do this? They slap my face; I'm supposed to turn my cheek. Forget *you*, saint. If I could give you any word of advice, it would be part of the slaying of our young people today: *forget you*, and remember that His Father once told Him, or He learned in eternity past in the face of God, that when they took His coat, He would give Him His cloak. When they slapped Him on one side of

His face, He'd turn the other one. If you will forget yourself, if you will give up the obligation of your living the Christian life, forget the obligatory, forget you and start seeking to find His relationship with His Father. I am telling you that what you and I need is a touch of His Spirit, but it does not necessarily entail your presence, for that touch.

Can you follow that simple, simple thought? Get out of the picture as much as you humanly possibly can. I have been reading *The Life of Christ in Stereo* for, I guess, 10, 12 years now. Frankly, it's about all the Bible study I do, and when I get to Atlanta, I will be preaching, and I think I'm all the way up to chapter nine of John in it, and I will be speaking on the Father and the Son's relationship to one another. I'm going all the way through the life of Christ. Someday I'm going to publish a book; I don't know whether it's going to be this big or that big. It will be nothing but the story of the Lord's relationship to His Father while He was on earth. As far as I'm concerned, that's what I need to discover in order to understand the Christian life. Forget me and my praying and going to church and all that. Let me go back to the tap root. Let me go back to the genesis. Let me go back to the origins of things, and let me find how He lived by an indwelling Father, and I will learn a little bit about living by an indwelling Lord.

So, I want to just come over and say to you, if there is all that in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, could I not take some passages in the epistles and look at them differently? I hear Paul telling people in Colossae all about the Lord Jesus Christ and what He is and what He does, but can I step away from Paul, and can I step away from the town of Colossae and say, "Those truths be true." And I can change one word from and that word is "He" and change it to "I" and it's almost like I get a new page in the Gospels. Or I can change it from "He" to "You" and I can hear my Father talking to His Son. I wonder if you followed me. Well, it won't matter; I'll illustrate it. Let's go to Colossians, and we'll take chapter one. The greatest Christological passage in all of holy writ. I'm going to read it three times from the viewpoint of Paul and me, and the viewpoint of you as we listen. But we get bogged down here in space and time sometimes. Let's hear it the way it's written.

Colossians 1:15-20. He is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rules or authorities. All things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all of the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself.

Now, that's beautiful, isn't it? Listen to your Lord tell you who He is. Are you ready? "I am the image of my Father; I am the first thing that ever happened in creation. Inside of me, everything was created. Everything of the heavens was created in Me. Everything on earth was created in Me. Everything visible was created in Me. Everything invisible was created in Me. If it were a throne or a dominion or a rule or a power or authority, they were created in Me. Everything has been

created through Me, and I created everything for Myself.” How do you like this so far? Say, Praise the Lord. Would you? Amen. All right.

Now, I am before everything. In Me, everything holds together. And I am your head. I am the beginning, and I am the first who has ever torn free of death. All this so that I might have first place in everything. It was My Father's good pleasure for all of Him to dwell in all of Me and through Me to reconcile everything to Him. Wow. Praise the Lord. This is glorious. Don't look at me like that. Don't just sit there and stare at me like that. Does that mean anything to you? Okay, let's do it again.

My Son, You are My image. You're the first of all creation. Everything was created in You: the heavens, the earth, the visible, the invisibles, the thrones, the powers. Everything was created through You and for You. You were here before all things, and everything holds together by You. You are the head of the church, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. You have first place in everything. It was my good pleasure that all of Me would dwell in You. And everything, everything would be reconciled to Me through You. Praise the Lord. I'm going to do it again, and I'm going to move it. Now, I don't want to wear this out, but I'm trying to teach you something here. Are you understanding? I'm trying to teach you that you're free of time and space, and you belong inside of Christ. Why don't you go get there? Alright. Hey, I love this. I'm so excited. The more you do this, the more it does it to you. Alright.

You will become My image on earth, and there will be a creation, and You will be the first thing in it. You will create everything. You'll create heavens. You'll create the earth. You'll create things that are visible and invisible. You'll create thrones, dominions, authorities, and powers. Everything will be created through You, and my Son, everything will be created for You. I am in the Godhead, brothers. I'm way back there, way, way back there. This is wonderful. Praise the Lord. You will be before all things, and everything that will be will hold together because You are. And then You will become the head of the redeemed, the church. You will be the first to triumph over death. My Son, I will make it so that You have first place in everything. It is my pleasure that all that I am fully Yours, and You will be made King of kings and Lord of lords. For all things that are will fall away, but You'll reconcile them and bring them back to Me.

We're going to hear it one more time. One more time. Now, you know, I have no question in my mind that this took place; somewhere this had to happen. And what I'm about to tell you is going to happen. It hasn't happened yet, but it's going to.

Father, I have made You visible. I created everything: the heavens, the earth, dominions, and thrones, and powers, and principalities. They were created by Me, and they were created for Me, and they held together by Me, and they all belong to Me. I now stand head of the church triumphant. I was the beginning, and now I am the end. I was the firstborn from the dead, and here are all those who have torn loose from death. And Father, I am now first in everything. It was Your good pleasure for everything to dwell in Me and for Me to reconcile everything to You. Father, here it is. Reconciled to You. The redeemed, I am bringing them back to You. Father, they are

Yours and they are reconciled with You. And now, Father, all Your fullness dwells not only in Me, but in them. And all glory now rebounds and returns to You, Father. All praise, all glory, and all honor to the Father now and forever. Amen. Don't just sit there. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

I want you to rewrite this passage just to get your old "time space" mind ripped loose from space and time. I would like for you...I'm not going to ask you to do it...but you ought to do this. You ought to rewrite this four times, just exactly the way I did before you ever turn it into a prayer. Now, I'm going to do one more. You see, that was easy, wasn't it? And I'm not suggesting that all of this is going to be easy, but I am suggesting to you that there comes a time when it gets a lot easier. Now, I have not planned to do this. I have just picked this passage. Let's see what happens. I'm going to tell you, I believe that somewhere in this right here, I will find that which is utterly and totally real to the Father and the Son that has got nothing to do with any events that took place on this earth. Let's see if I'm correct. This is chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians 1. I think I'll stand here in time and look at my Lord. I'll do what you did this morning. I'll start there. It's easier for me to start there.

Lord Jesus, You are grace, and You are peace. You are my prayer. You are my faith, my love, my steadfastness, and You chose me to be one of Yours. I thank You for the Gospel that you gave me that came with such conviction. Lord, I have received Your word, and even in tribulation, I can joy in You. I'm all the way down to verse six. And I can skip over with verse seven and never blink. I can skip over verse eight and never blink. I don't have to be an Aristotelian. I don't have to be a son of Aristotle; I can just skim the top of this thing.

Because of you, Father, you have taken the idols out of my heart, and I wait for the day of the return of Your Son. Lord Jesus, You have delivered me from death and from the wrath to come. Now, wasn't that simple? I have just found that which is real. I didn't have to get caught with Achaia and Macedonia, and I don't have to be troubled with the problems in Thessalonica; those Christians don't have any problems anymore. Now I'm going to try to do this again. I'm going to try to find just that which is between the Father and the Son. I may stumble all over this, but I'll eventually find a little bit. Now, if you work really hard at this, it won't work. You'll get your mind in there studying, and my friend, your Lord will disappear. Let your spirit sparkle, and if it doesn't sparkle, keep on moving.

Father, the church is Mine, and You have given to her grace and peace. Oh, no, I know what I'm going to do. I don't dare. I don't. I just won't do it. Uh, no. No. I'm not prepared to do it. No. This is worse than bold. This is making love in public. I don't know if I can do it, but there is the possibility we could find here even a conversation between Christ and His church. It will sound almost as if it's me, but could you use your imagination and let her speak? Will you listen to her for a minute? I mean, that girl that we met here the other night, will you listen to her?

My Lord, You are my grace and my peace. You are the faith working in me. You are the love that labors in me. You are my hope, so firmly established. I stand in Your presence because

You have chosen me. My Lord and my God, thank You for coming to me. I have known such tribulation, but by Your Holy Spirit, I have known such joy. Cannot believe that I, a worshiper of idols, has been turned by the glory of Your face. And I face Your Father and mine just as You do, and live in His presence with You before Him. My Lord, I am here. I'm waiting for the heavens to open, and I'm waiting for You to receive. Amen.

Now, that sounded like me praying, but I want you to know I didn't have that sense at all up here. I don't know how you felt down there, but now we're not finished with First Thessalonians chapter 1. You can turn that around and make it a love letter from the Lord to His bride. Gene, I don't find all this; I can't shake that out of this chapter; It's not there. Maybe it isn't now. Try Colossians 1:15, it's easier. But if you can just skim through, you will find that which is eternal in any and every chapter in the New Testament that's got nothing to do with space and time. It has to do with those things which are eternal and utterly spiritual. They are there, that's what I'm trying to tell you. So, here's a new assignment. Work on First Thessalonians.

And now, when you've gotten through doing all of these intellectual things... and some of you will work on this until sweat drops from your face and you'll write me a letter and say, "Gene, I just can't get anything out of this and I'm just struggling and it's so painful." Well, bless your little pointed head. Go back to Psalms 23. Get Colossians 1 and sit down with some dear sister who loves to cry when she prays, some tenderhearted soul, and see if we can't get through this enormous, incredible blockage that's going on in you. I will give you one more assignment: do the same thing with Ephesians 1.

And now, when you have rewritten these, some of them you'll want to rewrite. I think you ought to rewrite 1 Thessalonians 1, four times, just exactly like we did here. Maybe five, maybe six. I have rewritten some passages in the scripture six times. I've moved it everywhere I know to move it. God has blessed us with a rich language. You can move it to the past, to the future, to the present. You can make it he or she or me or you or y'all or they and we, and you can also make it past perfect, future perfect, and present perfect. And isn't there another one? What? Past imperfect. Give me past imperfect. The past imperfect. Okay. Is there a present perfect? He's very present and perfect. Okay. Is there is there a future imperfect? I don't think there is, is there? There is a future imperfect. Let me hear a future imperfect. I will be doing. I will have been. That's perfect. I will be doing. I will be doing. So, there's a future imperfect. Isn't that wonderful? I've got all this, and then on top of all that, I've got eternity. Oh, what a rich language God has endowed us with. The poor Chinese are only stuck with the present tense; did you know that? I always expect them to point to the past and future when they talk. They have only the present tense. I don't know how they communicate the past and future. That's probably all God has, yes, but I'm in need of such a rich language.

Okay, now you need another Christian. Brothers and sisters, this is wonderful alone, but this is "wonderfuller" and "wonderfullest" with another Christian. And I really do; I want to get you in a place where you can't get out of this. And that's why I really hope that somewhere or other

you and I can meet somewhere, and I can be with you one night a week, and we'll just explore this to the ends. Do some writing first, and having done some writing and getting used to this, maybe take Colossians 1 or maybe take Ephesians 1 and sit down early in the morning with another Christian quietly before the Lord. Wait on Him; make love to Him, and then take these wonderful passages of scripture and turn them into fellowship outside of time and space.

Now, I'm through. Wasn't that simple? And isn't it incredible? Don't look at me like that. Don't sit there silently. You have just been faced with the greatest revolution your Christian life will ever know. And that is an absolute fact. We shall not go beyond our unity with the Lord Jesus Christ. You're not going to get any higher than that. And here is a key, and here is a door. Do you have a question? Okay. Right up there next to those is that little yellow box that says conference expenses are a bunch of books, and I'm going to Quebec City, and I don't have any room for Cornell and his wife and his two children because I have to pile all those books in there. I'm going to give you a deal. I'm going to make you a deal. I'm only going to do this today. Now remember, you're already getting 20% off, you Canadians, with your funny-looking Monopoly money.

Oh, I remember the first time I came to Canada. I was 19 years old, and it was a dollar and a nickel. Yeah, I know, but this particular present has been going on for a long time. It hurt me a lot more than it helped when Helen and I bought our house. Dollar for dollar. Exactly. Dollar for dollar. It was that year that you guys put Trudeau back in, and it went, remember when they first thought it was his wife that was causing that? They dropped 30% right after we bought the house. And now your dollar is not coming back up. Ours is dropping down where yours is. It has about the same value as a Kleenex. Anyway, anything on that table for the next 30 minutes is 50% off of whatever the price on it is. I want those books gone, utterly, totally gone, the tapes, too, and Christian books will just have to...I've mothered those books.