

(Continued from Part 1)

And the reason is that neither you nor I are ever going to...we're going to stay as Christians, but we're not going to survive a 40-year hunt for the truth if we have not had a revelation of the Lord Jesus...it's going to backfire on you eventually. You're going to be hurt deeper than you ever understood hurt could be, hurt worse than cancer could ever hurt. Hurt worse than the loss of a loved one could ever hurt. The worst pain, at least in your soul, you can ever know is the hurt that comes from being inflicted on you by other Christians, especially in some corporate expression, when you are put down, you are chastised, excommunicated, demeaned, gossiped about. You will not survive with joy without a deep, deep revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ in your spirit.

I want to say something to you who might be Christian workers. Let your church get in trouble, and you will start picking up all sorts of "its". He's got a demon. I tell you, he's of the devil. You never heard that before, have you? No. You never heard a Christian talk that way about you? I bet it felt so good, didn't it, for someone to say that you were of the devil? Didn't you enjoy that day? Went home feeling so good. That hurts. Brother, you have no business in ministry.

Let me tell you what a problem in the church is for. It is for *you*. It is an opportunity given to you to broaden, heighten, and deepen a revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way any body of believers is ever going to survive anything when they get into a mess, and there's dissension and all sorts of problems, is to... Lord, forgive me for being light, but to drown them in the face with the knowledge and the revelation of their Lord. That's what you're supposed to do. That's your heritage. That's what the brothers did in the first century when they got in trouble - they presented Christ. That's how they dealt with these problems. If, brother, you stay on this earth and deal with that which is objective and outward, you have done nothing.

Dear saint of God, if you are one of those causing the trouble and the dissension, and I know you didn't mean to, it just happens. You're disgruntled; you have done nothing but show that you've never caught a glimpse of the excellency of Christ Jesus. There is an unfolding. There is a revealing of your Lord and mine that has been missing in the church for 1700 years. I pray, Lord, I pray right now that you will raise up men who have seen Him, and in the tightest days, and in the worst moments, and in the darkest hours, and in the most awful situations, you'll minister Jesus Christ. That's all you minister in, and when they take you out, you'll still be ministering Him. You will live with a clear conscience, and you will not get bitter.

Dear child of God, if the Lord so blesses you to catch a sight of Him and you're caught up in a church fight, you're going to be in pain, but you're not going to be bitter because, despite all that's happening around you, to see Him is to live in the presence of a quiet awe. When all of these things are happening around you, and everything has fallen apart, you're going to sit there with a quiet awe of seeing your Lord. I'm not sure that any of us can truly come to rest in the Christian life without having Him unveiled here.

Now, I need to stop here, don't I, and say, "I'm not preaching something like the Pentecostals that you got to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit." I'm not trying to say you're selected, or you're unique if you do this, that this is the last move of God; this is the great final revival. I'm saying the very opposite: that if you have seen your Lord in your spirit, and you have really seen Him and see that you are in Him...and that in itself is Him...you see not His works, but Him; not His deeds, but Him, you will never be found starting a movement, praying for a revival, claiming that you or those who are with you are special. It is a contradiction in terms to use such cheap things and speak of a revelation of your Lord. It can't be done.

I want to say a couple other things here. I was driving along and listening to the radio one day, and I heard someone, I don't have any idea who he was, say, "I saw the Lord face to face. I stand 5' 11. I weighed about 180 pounds, and I saw Him face to face. He stands about 5' 11, maybe six feet tall, and weighs around 180 pounds. I saw Him face to face. He had dark brown hair and such and such eyes and so and so and so and so."

Brothers and sisters, if I ever see the Lord face to face, I may not live to tell about it. I will never see my Lord face to face. I will see my Lord on my face. I will...I will be on my face, and so will you. This is humbling; it does not vault you up, and it does not cause you to speak of your revelation of Jesus Christ.

Do you know it's not possible to boast of your spirituality? Have you ever thought about that? It's also not possible to boast of your sight of Christ. Can't be done. I'll tell you what else it'll do. It gives you great tolerance for the Lord's people, including the preachers who preach all this head stuff; because you see something...you just see something. You have seen the enormous centrality of your Lord. To touch a sight of Him is to touch the mind of God. The Father's mind is centered on the Son. All things of the Father were for the Son, as all things of the Son are for the Father. And you can not only add "for," but "in," "to," "by," and "through" on both sides.

One of these days you're going to be sitting in a meeting, and you're going to hear somebody promoting an "it," and it's not going to make you sad, and it's not going to make you want to throw the rascal out. It's just going to cause you to sit there and rest. I want to tell you something else. I'm not saying to you this is something that's going to transform you. You know, it's not going to make you somebody great. It won't improve your spirituality because it is not of you, by you, for you, through you, or to you. It is of Him, by Him, for Him, through Him, and to Him, and not to you. The arrows all point toward Him, not toward you.

I'm not saying it affects you at all, except that you see that all things are Christ. I'm not talking pantheistic here. Come on...our language here is so limited. He is the center of all things. He is the center of our gospel...and He is our Gospel. He is not only the center of our gospel; He's the circumference of our gospel, and He's the doctrine of our gospel. I want you to know something else. It will take away your obsession with theology. Let me tell you a story. You may not have ever heard of Thomas Aquinas. He wrote something, about that long, called *Summa Theologica*. "The sum total of all theology." Considered the greatest theologian of all time, he wrote on

everything there was to write about. He'd start on a subject, and his mind was so titanic that he'd add a qualification. He'd qualify that qualification with a qualification, qualify that qualification with a qualification, qualify that qualification with a qualification, and then he'd continue his line on.

Here's a story that you probably never heard about him if you have heard of Thomas Aquinas. In his old age, he had a revelation of this Lord, and he stopped writing. Someone said to him, "Do you reject what you have written? Is it wrong?" He said, "Not wrong, just unimportant," and that's the man whose theology is taught in every Catholic seminary in the world today and in every Protestant seminary in the world today. He's the father of Protestant theology as much as he is Catholic theology. When you learn theology, you learn Thomas Aquinas. I wish they would remember what happened to him in his old age. You lose a distaste for these things that have so separated us from one another.

Now, let me pick on you premillennialists for a moment. Brother, did you know that no matter how hard you try, you're not going to convince everybody in the world to be a premillennialist? That brings you to a choice. Doesn't bring me to a choice; it brings you to a choice. A lot of publishing houses, seminaries, Bible schools, and churches won't let you be part of them unless you're premillennial. Brother, I think that's a shame. Jesus Christ received me. That settles it. You got to receive me, too.

Well, are you premillennial? No. Why aren't you premillennial? Because you want me to be so bad. I will never be a premillennialist, so you will understand that you have lost a brother in Christ, in fellowship. Now, I want to ask you, dear premillennialist, do you want to be a premillennialist or do you want to be a brother? Will you please be my brother? Unqualified? Would you accept me? Me, unlearned, untaught, ignorant, and blind. Would you please receive me as a brother? For I shall never take your view of millennialism. I'm going to be really stubborn because I represent hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Christians who will never be premillennial.

Do you believe in falling from grace? Oh, dear child of God, please fall from grace. Do you believe once saved, always saved, no matter how badly you sin? Oh, dear child of God, go out and either believe that or sin; either one doesn't matter to me. You believe in speaking in tongues. You don't believe in speaking tongues. Will you receive me? I receive you. Will you give it up for Lent, friend? Please give it up so that we can be brothers. I don't care what you believe, and I'll tell you something else. Outside of those theological tenets we all believe: we believe in the virgin birth, we believe in the resurrection of the Lord and of the dead, we believe in His return...what am I leaving out here? We believe in the inspiration of Scripture. You want to make it verbal; we believe it in verbal. Any way you want to believe it, brother.

We believe those things. You know why we believe those things? There is a reason. There's just one reason. Because we're believers; that's where we got the name. We believe; others don't; we believe. I will tell you: if you ever see Him, you won't care. You will care that you have seen Him. Well, Gene, tell me how. I want to know how. What are my five steps for having a revelation of

Jesus Christ? Let me get real clear here with you, saint. I don't have the foggiest idea. None. But I will tell you something wonderful. If you read the old classics, and you read the Christians even in the dark ages who got a glimpse of Him, even that far back, they will say to you, "These are the things that ought to be." But don't ask me how, because I cannot tell you how. Only the Holy Spirit can. I've read that again and again and again, and I want you to know that's not my job. That's the Holy Spirit's job. But I will tell you this: hearing about it doesn't hurt. It won't block, get in the way, or become a stumbling block to you.

Well, how do I get the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to me? I don't have any idea. Well, what does it feel like, Gene? Go blow your nose. What does it look like, Gene? Oh, come on, saints. Are we going to turn this into something else we can merchandise? Dear child of God, I don't know. Someone said to me, "Well, if someone's not close to the Lord, is he less apt to have a revelation?" Oh, come on. Please. Will you lay this kind of thing down? I will first say to you that the revealing of Christ ought to be to a body of people. It will be when a body of people will see that all things in Scripture point to Him; all things exalt Him; all things are for Him. That all things of a spiritual nature are Christ. That all things are of His hand, that He is our gospel, that we haven't got anything else to go chase, that we chase after Him.

But Gene, could we possibly be centered on the Lord and nothing else for an entire lifetime? What about all the crises? Or what about all these things the Bible tells us to do and all of those things? If we get even the slightest glimpse of our Lord, we know that even when we go through these things, they are centered on our Lord, or if they're not, it doesn't matter. That you have come to some sort of inexplicable rest in Him.

May God give us men who will minister the Lord Jesus Christ and a revelation of Him in all times. Let them take Paul as their standard. A brother, a very dear brother, we were having a retreat a few weeks ago. I was talking about problems in the church, and he said, "But Gene, don't we have to be scriptural? This Bible tells us we're supposed to do this, this, and this." Or in other words, the Bible tells us to throw the rascal out. I responded to him: you do the scriptural thing last; what you do is you go to the cross. The first thing you do is suffer. The first thing you do is you experience pain. The first thing you do is your forebear. The first thing you put up with until you are in agony. Don't you dare...when a problem in the house of God comes up, do something scriptural. That's cruel.

Anybody can go get the Bible out and start doing something. Brother, where is your Lord? Where is the cross? Where's the pain? And by the way, that's a different view of Scripture. That is a sight of a Lord who was crucified before the foundation of the ages; that the cross is His very nature. I would really not want to be caught in a group of people who are biblical. Man, I don't know of anything...I'm going to get...can't you see that? Gene Edwards doesn't believe people should be biblical. Man, listen. I'm afraid of "biblical-ists." I want to be among "Christ-ists." I want to be among people who first see Him before they do anything.

A few days ago, I was sitting in my living room with a dear brother. His name is Koshy. He has worked with Bakht Singh for much of his life; he was saved under his ministry. You may not know who Bakht Singh is. Bakht Singh may very well be the great Christian of our century... and it's reasonable that you've never heard of him. He's not an American...and he is truly a giant. So there's no way you'd ever hear of him.

Bakht Singh was sitting with some brothers in a meeting. Brother Koshy told me this. A brother had committed adultery, and they were talking about what to do to him. They went on and on, and Brother Bakht Singh sat there and said nothing. At the very end, he said, "Brothers, how would you handle this if it were not these brothers, but if it were Bakht Singh?" They looked at him, startled, and one of the brothers began to cry. The other brothers understood, and they began to repent. See, they were going to do the biblical thing, until the scene shifted and they had bowels of compassion.

I cannot explain to you what it means to see Him. Certainly, I'm not talking with your eyes or in a coma. Please deliver me. Don't you dare take my words that way. I would run from such a brother, especially if he told it twice, because every time you tell one of these things, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. I read a little story of a brother who had just had a thought about something. The next time He saw it, it was a vision. The next time, it was a revelation; the next time, an entire movement was built on it, and it's influential in America today. It became a revelation. I have often heard people say I had a revelation of...I had a revelation of this...there is only one revelation. There may be many visions, but there is only one revelation. That is the revealing of Jesus Christ. That's all.

The book of Revelation is not a book of what's going to happen. The book of Revelation reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, and it won't ever make any sense until you see it as revealing Him. May the eyes of your spirit and the eyes of the heart of the house of God be open that you might see Him. That as you come to Scripture, you see not Scripture nor doctrine, but Him. Saints, listen: between the third century and all the theological mess that we have been taught since then, and our minds have been turned in this direction, there is a great chasm. We have thrown everything in the world into that chasm to try to fill it up. Only one thing will bridge this gap between all our divisions and opinions: Christ revealed in your heart. Until the first thought in all things is my Lord. Until you can see Him so superbly.

Now I want to say one thing to you here: I am not talking about sermons on the life of Jesus Christ taken out of the four gospels and how He was kind and you ought to be kind. He gave, so you ought to give; He was nice, and you're not nice, and He prayed, but you don't ever pray. I'm not talking about that kind of thing. Hear me. That's *about* Christ. That's not *Christ*. That's not in Him, of Him, through Him, to Him, by Him. That's not Him. That's *about* Him. And boy, I know that you and I have been preaching that. I know you tried to live up to it. And I know something...two other things. You didn't make it, and I'll tell you something else. You got very despondent over your failure. Well, give it up, Saint. We begin with the unveiling of Christ Jesus.

Well, what do you do, Gene? I don't have any idea. You might pause one day and say, "Lord, would you please allow the Holy Spirit to do the one thing we're all sure he's supposed to do?" There is a lot of debate about the Holy Spirit, but one thing is indisputable. The first function of the office of the Holy Spirit is to manifest and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in you. That's His first and foremost job. You don't need tongues nearly as much as you need the Holy Spirit birthing a revelation of your Lord in you.

I would just ask one question. Will you ever meet the Christ of the four gospels? Will you ever meet the Christ of the four gospels? Will you ever know Him? This is the Christ of Galilee and Judea. Will you ever meet Him? Will you ever know Him? Well, let's get a consensus here. Do you say yes? Think about it for a moment. He's not here, folks. Go to Galilee and Judea; He's not there. When you see Him, He won't be a carpenter. He will be Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Paul said, "Even the Lord, we do not know after the flesh."

Have you ever looked at Paul's Christ? He's not the Christ of the four gospels. He almost never refers to the Christ of the four gospels. He is Christ crucified. He is a Christ of the cross; not on the cross, of the cross. He is an enthroned Christ. He is a resurrected Christ. He is a triumphant Christ. He is an ascended Christ. He is an enthroned Christ, and He is a glorified Christ. And that Christ - that Christ - is in you, and that Christ is the Christ the Holy Spirit is probably going to reveal to you.

I would present to you that, especially in the mess we've been in for the last 1700 years, it wouldn't hurt to see your Christ, your Lord, Jesus; whatever name you want to call Him or you do call Him, it wouldn't hurt any of us to see Him a little bit more...and at the center. And at the center.

Let me say this to you. You know, when Christ came into you, He didn't leave part of Himself outside. Everything you ever need of Christ, or ever will need, came into you. And in that respect, we are complete. We are complete because He's in us and because we're in Him. We are complete in Him, and that's a verse of scripture, not just a song. I guess our problem is that nobody told us. It's very, very difficult to have a full sight of Him when nobody tells us; especially when they're telling us things that clog all this up. Saints, let me get you clear on this. You have been put under the law in almost everything you have been preached.

Now, I don't really care if somebody puts you under the law if you've gotten a really good sight of the Lord Jesus; that would be like putting butter on glass and then trying to slow it. It just won't work. I don't care what they preach to you if you have begun with the Lord as the center of all things. But if you don't have that, you're subject to everything on this earth. And there is freedom. *It was for freedom that He set us free.* He didn't set us free to put us in bondage. May God reveal to you, my Lord and your Lord, that you can't be put under the law by anybody. May that day come when there's nothing that'll put you under the law.

Now, I want to say that these things should happen in the church, but even the church is not a revelation of Jesus Christ until we see the church as part of our Lord. I don't mean something with

Him, by Him, but something that is part of Him. We are from here down. He, more centrally, is from here up, but it's all the Lord.

Throw that thing back on, and let me say one last word to all of you about that very matter. About three or four months ago, Christianity Today ran an article. The title of it was, "Whatever happened to the local church?" I grabbed it and started reading. The writer, whom I called as soon as I got through reading it, said, "At no time has the church ever been understood or proclaimed in America." Well, what are all those church buildings doing up? Oh, we can proclaim a church building, and we can proclaim a church building fund; we can do it almost as well as the Catholics did during the dark ages when they built all those cathedrals. They had a real slick way of doing that - they enslaved everybody for two or three months and made them build that thing. Well, anyhow, we don't do too much better.

In Europe, there is a doctrine of the church, in which there is respect for it as something other than a building, but not much even there; at least it has its history. At no time in America has the church ever been anything but an instrument of the minister; for the minister. She...not it...she is never preached. She is never seen in her glory. She is never seen in God's eternal purpose. She is never seen as part of His heart's desire. We might preach evangelism, but we do not preach the church. Everything we do proves that we would dare start an organization to win people to Christ is an abomination. That is separate from the church.

Well, it is called a parachurch organization. Parachurch, to what church? You mean para to a building? Get to know the people who run those organizations. They run those organizations because the church is boring and they're having fun out there. Traveling to Albania, traveling to places and preaching and raising money and having their wonderful meetings, they are a substitute for something terribly boring. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not understood and experienced. I want you to know that when you see Him, you will be ruined toward 11 a.m. on Sunday morning because when you catch a sight of Him, a part of Him is her, because she's in Him. As sure as Eve was in Adam, she's in Him.

May the Lord give the day. You go home and pray this...I urge you to. May the Lord open the eyes of American Christians to see the ekklesia and long for her. I brought all that up to say to you, you may go out and say this, but not with my blessing. Oh, but Gene, wherever three or four gathered together in the name of the Lord, there's church. Excuse me, but I was born and raised in Texas. And there is a term we use that, if you use it outside of Texas, it's not nice, but unless you people have gotten awfully sophisticated, then this still just means what it means. When you say where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is the church, my response is...bull.

That's a perfect example of our having never seen her. She is a community; she is a civilization; she is a people who are one with one another throughout their entire lives, committed to each other. She's a live-or-die situation. She has a passport; she has a passport to the Eternals. She is part of the Eternals, and she is a colony on this earth of the heavens INHABITED by people who are sons

of the living God and are not part of the species walking around on this planet. That's what she is: she meets, she gathers, and she cares for one another. And the two or three gathered in His name are people in the church who are trying to figure out whether or not to throw someone out of the church. There is not anything pleasant about "where two or three are gathered in my name; there I am in the midst of them." That's a terrible situation. It's a situation that has to do with dealing with someone who is turned away from the faith. When did that ever become something sweet?

If you want to pray something tonight when you go home, pray that the Lord would take the fat, the dumb, and the happy and work something deep into us, that we could come to comprehend. For instance, that all those verses we quote come out of letters to churches; that we could come to see her and fall in love with her and stop the sermon sipping and the church hopping and come to a full commitment to one another right where we live. Come hell or high water, and be held together by a Lord who is exalted on high, who is glorious, and who is worth the suffering and pain of putting up with one another.

I think I brought this up because, you know, I enjoy reading the saints of the dark ages and the Catholics; that's all that were around. You can see the corruption in what they write, and then you can see the glimpses, and some of it's really pure. Not much, but a little of it, but boy, it's worth me picking it out, putting it in their book for you to read it without all the other mess. Every one of those people got in trouble with the church without exception. They all got in trouble with the church of their day.

It is true, and I must warn you that the best you can hope for is that you will be miserable going to church the rest of your life. That's the very best you can hope for. So maybe you better go home and say, "Lord, I like it just the way it is. I love getting dressed up on Sunday morning, and I like to go down there, and I got a great preacher, and I love that singing. That choir is great. My dear child of God, if that's true, then stay there because those of us who can't handle that are no better than you are. We are no better than you are, and you're no better than we are either.