

The Anointing

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The Anointing

Chapter 1 – The Nature of the Church as Anointed Vessel

We shall continue our consideration of this aspect of our general theme, namely the church, the Body of Christ as the Anointed vessel. I want, as the Lord shall enable me, to be quite simple and get down to the more elementary phases of this great revelation, because the revelation of the church, the Body of Christ, is a special revelation of special magnitude, and as we have said, represents God's eternal purpose concerning His Son. But to come to the defining of this at its beginning; the nature of the church which is the Body of Christ. Of course at this time of the age we have perhaps as much to unlearn as we have to learn in this matter. We have become accustomed to certain ideas, presentations and forms which are associated the word 'church'. For the majority of people the word immediately conjures up to the mind something here of man's constitution, organization, a world religious order and system. I think I need not say that for many people, the word 'church' holds them either to a material building or to a denomination or to all the denominations together, but let us say at once that none of these ideas are the New Testament meaning of the church. The church which is His Body is essentially a spiritual and a heavenly thing. When we use the word 'spiritual', we do not mean that it is something abstract, but that it is constituted and composed of spiritual people, and spiritual people we know from the Word are the opposite of natural people.

"Now the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God ... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned", or "they are discerned by the spiritual", and then the apostle develops that double thought as to the natural man and his wisdom, his standards of judgment and so on. And then on the other hand he develops the truth of the spiritual man. In that sense those who have passed through the great change by reason of identification with the Lord Jesus in His death to the realm of nature, and His burial, the disappearing of one whole order of creation from the eye of God. And His resurrection bringing into being something entirely different from that which was crucified, such constitute the church which is His Body. You see the difference in the first nucleus of that Body, the apostles. They had a relationship to Christ which was a natural relationship, although it carried them a considerable way in the matter of devotion and affection and admiration and willingness and desire even to die for Him; but it was after all at best a natural relationship. It is found incapable of taking the strain. Again and again it breaks down. Peter who is the representative of that company, himself represents the utter inability of even a natural devotion to the Lord Jesus to go through. And at the end that company is seen represented by Peter in the breakdown of the natural man's devotion to Christ.

It is seen in other ways, that although the Lord Jesus said so much to them and at times they said that they understood, it comes out in the end perfectly clearly that they did not understand, and that is manifested on the way to Emmaus by two who represent the rest, that they had not understood at all, and He had to open their understanding, so that although they had heard, they knew all that we now have recorded in the four gospels, they knew it all and yet they did not know it. It is shown that they did not know it because it was the apprehension of the natural man and it could not go through to the spiritual meaning and spiritual value. They saw His works, they were tremendously impressed, stimulated and carried on by His works, and they believed of course in miracles, and yet it is proved in the long run that all the miracles that He performed had not conveyed to them the spiritual significance that He intended to be conveyed, and He had to call them up upon that very matter more than once, that they had seen the miracle and even now they doubted again and did not believe. Although they had a miraculous demonstration they had not recognized the principle and therefore could not be carried through by the miracle. They were thinking of things on a natural ground and

had failed, and they are the great proof that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus abode in a new form for forty days. He appeared and He disappeared; He came through closed doors, through barred doors, He went as He came. One instant He was in one place and the next instant He was miles away. They never knew how to take Him, what to think of this. It was full of surprises, full of uncertainty, full of mystery, and yet full of the greatest reality. It was not an abstraction, it was something very real, proved: "*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*", and they gave Him of the fish and honeycomb and he ate before them. This was not abstract. It was very real, and yet so different from the other. Why did the Lord Jesus carry on like that for forty days? He was seeking to help those men to think in a spiritual sense, to have spiritual ideas about Him. Real, as real as anything could be, and yet not on the old level, but now on another level. He was making them spiritual men in their apprehension of Him. So different from their old apprehension. Spiritual men in their interpretation of things. Forty days were used by the Lord for that very purpose. Something of tremendous value would have been lost if He had left them at once on His resurrection. There would have been room for all kinds of things to have been said about the Lord Jesus; that He was more or less an unreality, that He may have appeared in bodily form just once and then gone but that was only a form which He assumed for the purpose of letting them know that He was alive. And now we do not know whether that form abides — all those kind of things could have come in. But for those forty days He was day after day, week after week pressing in upon them the spiritual reality of Himself, and giving them a spiritual mind about His things. You see the difference? And at the end of that time, why something had been done, and when the Holy Spirit came and united them the heavenly and spiritual nature of Christ was the greatest reality to them. It was no mere abstraction; Christ was not merely a spiritual apparition, Christ was a living Person as real as any other man, and yet different. Now what is true of Christ is true of the church. That is, that it is in nature, in essence, a spiritual thing; it has a spiritual life, a resurrection life, it has a spiritual birth, it has a spiritual principle of energy, it has a heavenly conception and apprehension of things and not that of the natural man.

Every member of the church is in nature spiritual by its birth, every member, and by the principle of its life, and by its power of apprehending the things of the Lord; an entirely new nature, a new order of creation; it is spiritual. And it means simply that it is spiritual people in that sense that constitute the church. The church is not a number of religiously inclined and devoted people congregating together and putting down their names and saying we form a church. That is foreign to the Word of God and to the New Testament. It is not something which we can join, of which we may be adherents; no, you cannot join the church. No one can ever join the church of the New Testament. You come into it first of all by going out through the death of Christ, and then coming in through the resurrection of Christ. We only come into the church which is His Body on the principle of resurrection and new birth. It is not something that we can join. It is a spiritual thing which requires a spiritual nature, it is heavenly; that is, its origination is in heaven. It comes out from heaven. It is not something that is set up in the first instance on the earth; it comes out from heaven. The fact is that you and I in order to have an apprehension of spiritual things and to enter into spiritual things have to come into them from above, we can never come into them on the horizontal. The spiritual course of things is this: here we are on this earth-level by nature; we have to die and be born out of that level and God brings us by resurrection ascension, by heavenly union with Christ into the things of God as from above, born from above. That is how we come into the church. The church is composed of such people, but we cannot get into this or into anything of the Lord by trying, struggling, or fighting our way in. The only way in is to die, be raised, and be brought in from above. This is something which is made real when we take in faith our position as shown in Romans 6. These terms you may not be able to understand but you will if you are going on with the Lord. Let us keep this governing

truth in mind that the church, His Body, is spiritual and heavenly and not something which man can set up or constitute, organize, or arrange, or which man can join and become a member of along any line of religious inclination or desire. Nature breaks down in its best devotion to the Lord. There has to be something of God from above to carry us through with the Lord or we will never get through. There is however, an expression of this thing on the earth in the desire of the Lord. It is not something which is in the clouds and merely spiritual or only spiritual in that sense that it is off the earth. We are here and we are regarded as the spiritual people on the basis of that resurrection union with Christ with the Holy Spirit indwelling, and the Lord desires to have that heavenly thing and that heavenly order represented here on the earth by spiritual people. He desires to have an earthly representation of the heavenly thing. Moreover He also desires to have a local representation of the universal thing. He desires to have in the local assembly a microcosm of the whole church which is His Body constituted according to a heavenly order on heavenly principles, run by the Holy Spirit and not by man; the local microcosm of the whole church, His Body, of which He is Sovereign Head, and which He governs through the Holy Spirit.

Now we can illustrate it and I am selecting for the illustration of this from a very great deal of material in the Word of God, the case of the man through whom the divine idea of the church first came in in any definite way — Jacob! You get an idea of the Church in Adam and Eve, Christ and His Wife. You get others before Jacob, but with Jacob there definitely comes into view for the first time the name of the House of God, Bethel. Everything had been leading up to that in the divine order and now it comes definitely and positively into view. Now notice eight things about Bethel in the case of Jacob, and when you have got those eight things you have got comprehensively the nature of the church.

1) First of all the House of God, or Bethel, came into view as outside of the world. He went on his way: *"And Jacob went out from Beersheba and went towards Haran."* He left one place and he was making for another. Midway between, in a place which typically was outside of the world, *"he lighted upon a certain place."* All the features and all the words connected with that speak of it being — so far as this world is concerned — outside. That is very elementary is it not? Almost too simple. It might almost be thought to be fanciful but when you put all the other things together you will see that it is not fanciful. It could be shown that the church is always constituted upon that. The first tabernacle in the wilderness was put outside of a system which had become corrupted with the molten image; the golden calf was set up, the people of God became corrupted, and a false system was set up. Moses took the tent of meeting right outside the camp, and by so doing declared the House of God to be something outside of a religious system which is corrupt. In the letter to the Hebrews, referring to Judaism as the camp, the word is: *"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach"*. *"And he lighted upon a certain place"*. The House of God, Bethel, is outside of the world. The adversary's persistent effort all through the ages has been to bring the church into the world and the world into the church, and when he has done that he has robbed it of both its spiritual and its heavenly character, robbed it of the power of its anointing. It is always so. That is where you begin, outside of the world in a place apart. It is the Ephesian position: *"... and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"*.

2) Secondly, there nature's light disappears: *"... the sun was set."* The sun went down, nature's light goes. This is not fanciful. I remind you that the light of nature is not the light which illumines the House of God. In the tabernacle, in the most holy place it is the presence of God Himself. In the holy place the oil of the lamp, the Spirit of God is the illumination, and it is out from that divine illumination that everything goes for the life of the people; it is what comes by that illumination that causes everything to function for the people of God. If the whole people of God are gathered up in the Priests and Levites, and the Priests and Levites are the people by reason of identification, those Priests and Levites have the sustenance of their ministry and the table of shewbread in the place of

divine illumination. They feed by reason of divine illumination. If you are going to have a really spiritual ministry, a spiritual ministry of power and life, it is no use taking Christ historically, you have to have Him by divine illumination. You have to feed in the light of the Spirit. The altar of incense, the prayer life, back of the ministry of the people of God is in the presence of the divine illumination, and real prayer in the Holy Spirit always is illuminating, it is always educative, it is wonderfully enlightening. What a lot of light we get when we pray in the Spirit. How dark things are explained when praying in the Spirit. You see what I mean by the second thing. Nature's light goes out in the House of God and a divine light comes in. That is beautiful. That is where Jacob was. We have said a lot about nature's light; the mere power of man's reason or any kind of human ability to apprehend, spiritual things proved futile. Only the Holy Spirit can illuminate the mind concerning spiritual things. Some of us spent years of our lives trying intellectually to struggle through to a living knowledge of the Lord and at last had to give it all up in despair, because our reasons could not get at it at all. We had to be prepared to stop arguing on spiritual things, trying to get through by our arguments, discussions, reasonings, intellectual outworking and had to come to the place where divine light made the things of God clear to us. And the House of God is the place where nature's light has ceased to be the governing law and divine light rules. The House of God, the church which is His Body, is that to which the apostle refers in His prayer: *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ..."*. That is the House of God.

3) Thirdly: *"... a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven"*. What is Bethel? What is the House of God? What is the church which is His Body? It is the place where heaven and earth are united. Where heaven and earth meet in union and fellowship. Where "Heaven stoops down our souls to greet, and glory crowns the Mercy seat". It is heaven coming into evidence among men. That is simple but true. Is that true of what we call the church? Do we touch heaven and does heaven touch us in all that we call the church? Do those who gather find heaven coming into their lives, and find that that fellowship means to them a vital fellowship with heaven, a living union with heaven? That is what the Body of Christ is for; that is what the Assembly is for; that is what the fellowship of saints is for; that we shall be brought into living touch with heaven. That is the fruit of every gathering of the saints. A ladder set up on earth and the top reached to heaven, but remember, that ladder is a type of Christ. It represents Christ. You remember what the Lord Jesus said to Nathanael: *"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."* He had already said to Nathanael: *"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."* As we have said, He said in effect: *"An Israelite in whom is no Jacob"*, and: *"Thou shalt see heaven open."* That ladder was a type and representation of the Lord Jesus as the link between His people here and what is there, and as the divine channel of heavenly things to us here on earth. Christ is the ministry of heavenly things to us. It is through Him that we are linked with heaven. We sit in the heavenlies in Christ; that is the ladder that links to an opened heaven. I want to give it its specific emphasis. Christ Himself, remember is the concrete representation of the church the House of God. He put Himself personally in the place of the "temple when He said: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

They thought He spoke of the temple at Jerusalem but He was speaking in a parable. He Himself was the temple. That truth was borne out by what He said to the woman of Sychar. She said: *"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem, is the place where men ought to worship"*. Jesus said: *"... the hour comes, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father ... true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him."* *"But the hour cometh and now is when true worshippers shall worship the Father."* What is the force of the "now is" connected with "neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem". Mount Gerizim or Mount Moriah have been set aside. They are only types. I am here and I take the place of the type, I fulfil the types, now I have come the

types cease. I am the temple. In Me all that is embodied in the temple is fulfilled, realized; that was only pointing to Me. I am come and that goes because the Reality is here. Remember that Christ is the representation of the church. When He came up out of Jordan the heavens were opened. That meant for Him from that moment that everything that He said and did and everywhere that He went was heaven directed, heaven governed, heaven controlled, nothing of Himself, all from heaven. The heaven opened. It meant that for Him life was lived on the principle of revelation from above. That is the New Testament church. The New Testament church, lived in that spiritual sense under an opened heaven, moved under an open heaven. Bethel sees established for the House of God for ever the opened heaven. That is what the fellowship of the saints ought to mean to the saints; that is what assembly life ought to mean; an opened heaven. For some of us that phrase: "*An opened heaven*" means so much. It represents the most precious thing of which we know. Whenever I say it I cannot refrain from giving my own testimony because my testimony represents such a tremendous change in things. A change from a man labouring under an almost overwhelming burden to a man who moves in a freedom of life. An opened heaven does not mean dispensing with a study of the Word. It is the illumination of the Spirit; it is the flow from heaven. I believe the Lord wants that for all His people. I believe the Lord wants them all to come into the good of the opened heaven. The fellowship of the saints should mean that.

4) Fourthly, "*Jehovah stood above it.*" Just one word which embodies a very great deal more. The Lord is over and above. He is in the place of Sovereign Headship. Bethel, the House of God comes directly under the government of God, not indirectly but directly under the government of God. Everything heads up into Him. But the Lord is in the place of sovereign government in the church His Body, the House of God.

5) Fifthly, the Lord speaks and the Lord speaks to man and man becomes the object of the Lord's peculiar interest. That is the House of God, the nature of Bethel.

6) Sixthly, the Lord has His interests bound up in man; to use the Pauline (if I may use that word) expression: "... *that ye may know ... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*", and that inheritance of God is in the House of God. In those who comprise the House of God, God has got His inheritance. He will not realize His inheritance in Jacob for a little while but His inheritance is in Jacob and ever through history it is: "*I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*". God has got an inheritance in Jacob. God has got an inheritance in us as we form for Him His church, His Body, His House, an inheritance which He is going to realize.

7) Seventhly, at length Jacob awoke. "*Surely Jehovah is in this place and I knew it not.*" "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven", and Jacob was afraid. "*And of the rest durst no man join himself to them*". Jacob set up the stone upon which his head had been resting, the stone, the pillar of his vision, set it up and anointed it, and called the name of the place Bethel. The name of the place before was Luz. A stone erected and anointed. That is the House of God.

Go through the Word of God and you will find a pillar erected is always the symbol of a testimony. You have it again and again coming in. A testimony is represented by a pillar set up, and here is a testimony under the anointing. A testimony to a divine unveiling in the power of the anointing.

Now this has all been said to define the nature of the church. I would have you dwell much upon these things; ponder them deeply.

8) Eighthly, notice the next thing as it comes out of that deep conviction of the soul of Jacob where he said: "*How dreadful is this place*" is the necessity for man to be suitable to the House of God before he can abide in it. Because the place was so awful to Jacob he could not stay there, and he left. Twenty years of spiritual history, discipline,

chastening followed. Mark you, we may have a kind of apprehension of the truth of the church the Body of Christ, but for that to be effectual and living in our experience, and for us to be in it we have got to be made suitable to it. The natural man cannot live in that, and so Jacob had twenty years of discipline all in relation to the House of God, for at the end of twenty years the Word of the Lord came to him and said.: *"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar ... now arise ... return."* What happened? Two things. When the Lord commanded him to go to Bethel he turned and looked round at his family, his home, his domestic life and he saw the images, idols, and he said, to his household: *"Put away those false gods, you cannot take those to Bethel."* You see, conviction of what was not in keeping with the House of God when he contemplated going to that "awful place". It would be inappropriate if he took those things there, and so adjustment to the House of God in things around was necessary. Then what happened? As he went on his way there met him a man who wrestled with him. We know that wrestle at Jabbok and in the strength of Jacob, determined once again to have the advantage on his own side as he had always had, he determined again as Jacob had always done to come out top, to be master of the situation by cunning or by sheer force; he wrestled, but he was wrestling with a Master this time and the issue of that wrestle was only a touch — the touch of his thigh and the sinew was withered and he was a broken man. The last picture you have of Jacob he is blessing his sons leaning upon the top of his staff. That goes back to his laming, his maiming. He carried that to his dying day. The strength of Jacob has been broken and when his strength is broken the Lord gave him another name, from the name of a natural man to the name of a spiritual man: *"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God ..."*. A spiritual man with the strength of nature broken. That is stability. Now he can go to Bethel. So we see what the church is, what the House of God is, what the anointing demands.

So facing together what God requires, what His conception of the church is, the practical questions are bound to arise because that is not generally the church we know; and the question arises, well how is that kind of representation to come about, how is it to be realized? We are in something perhaps very different from that, what are we to do? Leave it? Smash it all up? There are two things to do. First of all ask the Lord to bring you personally into the spiritual revelation and reality of His church. Do not begin to preach doctrine which is merely apprehended by your natural mind. It will not work; you will make a greater mess. Ask the Lord to bring you spiritually and experimentally into the truth of the Body. When you are there, beloved, you are in a place of spiritual ascendancy, spiritual power; the thing is so real that it is your very life, and when you have to meet the cost and pay the price of it all it will not be that you are able to give up the thing because it is a teaching, it will be so much a part of your life that you cannot give it up. If this had only been teaching with some of us we would have been out of it long ago for it is far too costly and painful. But because it is our very being, our very life, the cost has not proved great enough to drive us out; we cannot part with it without parting with ourselves. For us it means parting with the Lord. So the first thing to do is not to take the system of truth and begin to try and apply it, but ask the Lord to bring you, if it means through death to the old nature, spiritually and experimentally into the living reality of the church by revelation of the Holy Spirit. Then what will you do? Begin out of your own revelation to impart, as the Lord leads, the truth. What will you find? Movement! The carnal and unspiritual will begin to fight. It will be always like that. The devil will come out and try to make an awful mess. That is complimentary. Spiritual people will begin to see and say: "That is it, that is what I have been longing for: I can see", and then perhaps one and then another, slowly a nucleus will be gathered and perhaps within the imitation thing the Lord will build up the real thing. What the crisis later may be will vary. There may be a crisis but you will be prepared to pay the price. The Lord may capture the whole situation with the real, or He may have to cut off and get in between, but if the thing is coming out from your own life, out of your own being in reality a revelation of the Holy Spirit, it is bound to be spiritually effective and God is bound to add to the truth those whose hearts are right towards Him. The church is not

built up by inviting people to join. The Lord added, but He had got something to which to add, and the Lord must have something to which to add. The Lord does not add to a system of teaching, doctrine, truth; the Lord adds to a life, to a living reality. That is how your problem will be solved. You have not to go and try and smash up the existing system. That will be destructive not constructive. First of all be in the thing livingly and then quietly, steadily, faithfully give the Word and the Lord does the rest. What I have said to you I have said out of experience. I know that is the way the Lord does it because that is the way the Lord has done it.

Chapter 2 – Going on to the Full Purpose of the Anointing

Reading: 1 Sam. 22:1,2; Ex. 33:7; John 10:24-31,40-42; Acts 22:17-21; Heb. 3:13.

This portion of the first book of Samuel which we have read as you see introduces us to a fresh movement and another step in the direction of the Lord's ultimate purpose, in the direction of the realization of the purpose of David's anointing. A branch phase, and it looks like an indirect movement, but as we follow it through we shall see the way of the Lord and that there was no other way open to the Lord to take. We may say therefore in the light of the whole story which is before us, that the anointing of David led inevitably to the cave of Adullam. We shall perhaps best get to the spiritual significance of this if we take a glance at Saul and David in comparison and contrast and see what they bring before us in spiritual principle.

When we look at Saul from the point of the anointing of David we find that he speaks of that which very clearly expresses office, position, name without power, without anointing. He holds the office, he occupies the position, he has the name of king and ruler, but he is bereft of the power of the anointing, therefore one word sums up Saul and those bound up with him at that time; it is the word formality. Having a form but denying the power. Having a name to live, but dead. Then again, not only was Saul in the office and the position and holding the name, but Saul constantly betrayed a desire to govern in spiritual matters, to control the lives of the people spiritually, and he would bring the spiritual lives of the people under his official control and government.

Now on the other hand you have in comparison and contrast, David. David so far as the world is concerned and so far as the religious world is concerned, for it is that which is here before us mainly. Israel has not the name, the position, or the office, but in heaven he has and because in heaven he has, and David represents the power of the anointing, he represents spirituality, truth, the testimony. But David, who is the symbol of the spiritual reality of that which Saul only has in formality, is rejected by Saul, or by that which is in office at the time, that which has the name, that which occupies the position formally. And David, although recognized in heaven and occupying the heavenly position, is here on the earth even among those who have the profession and the name and the office, rejected, refused, and is called upon to endure the hatred and the reproach of the ruling powers. But David recognized what was in office and power and took up the position of being prepared to wait and patiently endure until what was true of him should become recognized necessary, and demanded. Now there is a tremendous amount of spiritual history in the ground that I have covered. And so in his rejection the position that David has to take is that of enduring a great deal at the hands of the religious powers that be and waiting patiently until those spiritual realities of which he is the embodiment are recognized and become necessary to the life of the Lord's people and then become demanded.

Now David in the first place did not take himself out of what was, he was forced out; he was forced out because of the anointing and what that anointing stood for. That means two things. That behind the rival powers religiously there was another intelligence which recognized even as men did not recognize, because we cannot fail to see the blindness and ignorance of the religious people. But there was an intelligence behind the ruling religious powers which did recognize what that anointing meant and what it would inevitably lead to unless it were circumvented and frustrated; that deeper sinister intelligence of principalities and powers recognized the value of that anointing and what that anointing would mean for them if it went on unobstructed; and then of course through the available carnal instrument of religion of mere formality, officialism without anointing, the issue was precipitated and David was driven out. What I want to point out is this, that it was not just some mental acceptance on the part of David which made it impossible for him to get on with anyone else or anyone else to get on with him; it was

the sheer spiritual value of that into which he had come by the anointing. It was a spiritual and not an ecclesiastical crisis; it was an issue which arose from something deeper than the choice of man, the likes or dislikes of men. It was precipitated by the spiritual meaning of David's life and he was forced out by that which marked him by the Spirit of God. Now that is the only justifiable ground of any kind of separation. It is very important that that should be recognized. Separation must never be on any merely surface superficial formal mental intellectual ground. It must be a spiritual issue for which we in the first place are not responsible, but which springs out of the reality of things spiritual. It was that that issued in the cave of Adullam. David was forced out because of the anointing and because of what it implied. But mark you, the day came when David accepted that and took his place outside. He was rejected, spiritually he was outside, refused long before he took his place outside. It seems that he stayed as long as he could in the house of Saul and put up with a very great deal, and although Saul owed the continuance of his throne to David, what David got in return was a javelin. David could again and again have raised the issue, brought about the crisis which would have meant Saul losing his throne, and David could have taken Saul's life more than once. But no, David held on for a long time and endured much but the day came when he was compelled to recognize that whether he would or not, the realization of the Lord's purpose demanded that he should take the place outside of a thing with which God was not associated, upon which the anointing did not rest. He had to take it. And I want to point out to you that that was one of the great days in David's life. It was a turning-point and from that day the purpose of God developed in a wonderful way. Things seemed from that day to have come from the nebulous, the abstract, the informal into the crystallized and the definite and the concrete.

I read from Exodus 33. You will have noticed the context of the corruption of the camp religiously, through Aaron, and then Moses coming down from the mount and hearing the noise and taking the whole situation in, coming into the camp, and his judgment of the wrong and calling for those who would set themselves against that corruption, that world which had come into the holy things, and all the sons of Levi came over on to his side, and he commanded every man to put his sword by his side and go throughout the camp and every man to slay his own brother and those of his own family. And the sons of Levi did it. Then after that Moses took the tent and pitched it over outside the camp and all who desired to seek the Lord went outside of that sphere of mixture and corruption to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

Now there are one or two things that I want you to notice in connection with this. Of course the main thing is obvious, that the principle of absolute separation from anything mixed in the things of God is a principle laid down by the Lord throughout His Word which is never for one moment modified, which the Lord demands to have applied up to the hilt. That is obvious and that means a going without the camp from office. Another thing is that the sword of the Levite corresponds to Hebrews four, "*For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit ...*". That is in the Hebrew letter written to Hebrew believers, and the occasion of that letter was that those Hebrew believers were in dire peril of bringing back again onto the ground of Christian profession and life the formalities of a finished Judaism. This was an old system which with the coming of Christ was set aside because it had been a type of Him and with the coming of the reality the type goes. They were in danger of bringing it back again, or lapsing from the truth to the imitation, from the spiritual to the typical, from the heavenly to the earthly, even religiously coming back from Christ to Moses. That represented the difference between soul and spirit. The whole Mosaic system of worship is a sentient thing all the way through, what we would call (I hate the word) 'soulish'. That is, it is a thing which comes to us through our soul senses; it is a tangible, seen thing. A thing that we can apprehend in our soul life. It is a soul thing, but the antitype, the reality, Christ in heaven, is a spiritual thing. That was an earthly representation which could be apprehended by the soul, that is, the natural faculties. A thing you could touch, hear, see; all appeals to you like the earthly Christian

churches, Romanism or Greek Orthodox, whatever it is; a system constructed upon the old Hebrew principle of something to be seen and heard, apprehended through the soul and which people enter by reason of their soul. But when you see Christ fulfils all the types in Himself, He is the temple, the Priesthood, Sacrifice, Altar, He is all, the type goes and you have all when you have Christ; but Christ is in heaven and you only have all that is in Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual thing which can only be grasped by the soul; you cannot literally walk about among it but know you have it by the Holy Spirit. You have it in your spirit by the Holy Spirit.

This principle was working out in Exodus 32 for Moses had gone away into the Mount and he represented all they had of God and now he was out of sight. The soul said, we must have something we can see and handle that is tangible real, and so they make the calf and set up this system and in so doing fall to something which is religiously earthly. Now the sword of the Levites cut that whole thing off, dividing between soul and spirit and cut in between and put them there, and those here, and then those who worshipped in spirit and in truth went outside of that realm to the tent of meeting and sought the Lord out there. You might say if you were going to carry this to its final issue, they went into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, outside the world. *"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."* The apostle was seeking to cut in between this tendency of the Hebrew believers to come down on to a soul-level of Christian life and to persuade and urge them that once and for all to have done with that which was the soul expression of things, and to maintain their spiritual position in Christ.

Now the third thing was this. That when Moses put that tent of meeting right outside the camp, in a sense it was one of the greatest days of his life. I was going to say it was the greatest day of his life, it was a wonderful thing that he did. Just look at it. *"And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend."* If that was not the greatest day in Moses' life I do not know of anything greater. It was then, it was there that it is said the Lord talked with him face to face as a man speaks with his friend. Do we want that? Do you see the basis of that? Do you see the way of that? Do you see where that is? That is in the place of absolute separation unto the Lord. That is in the place and the time when everything that is merely formal is repudiated. That is when all kinds of religious mixture have been forsaken, cut off, and we come out to a place in the Spirit with God. Then we come to know something of the meaning of God speaking face to face as a man speaks to his friend. That is fellowship. Fellowship with God is on that ground. That is communion. That is revelation. Those few things, beloved, are worth anything. I put it to you. Which would you sooner have, all the elaborateness of formal religion and all its activities and excitements, its interests, as something here on earth, or expulsion from that, being driven out from the whole thing and having opposition, antagonism, rejection, but with it the Lord speaking to you face to face as a man speaks with his friend? Which will you choose? Of course it is easy when we put things like that here to say which we would choose; when it comes to work it out is not quite so easy. It is a blessed wonderful thing to know the Lord speaking face to face, to know real fellowship and communion with the Lord and revelation from the Lord.

Now it was in that way that one of the greatest days in David's life was when he at length accepted the issues of his anointing and took his place, or took the place which spiritually had become his place by reason of the anointing. The day of the cave of Adullam was a very great day and a turning-point in the life of David. He deliberately went there and he deliberately accepted the meaning of going there. This was that he had now for the time being a settled definite place, position, a base, a spiritual base of operation until there should be a recognition of and demand for that which he in principle represents. So that moment quite a clear issue arose. Until then people did not know where they were, no one knew where he was. They were just wavering, double-minded, unstable because double-minded. From that day all who loved formality and empty name and powerless office clung to Saul. From that day all who recognized spiritual value and

where the Lord was went to David. You see a clear parting of the ways arose. That was the great issue of the day of the cave of Adullam. Those who were really in need and in distress, hungry, perplexed and discouraged as the result of Saul's evil governing (that was the point) went to David. All who found not that the reign of Saul brought to them heart satisfaction went to David; those who were not heart hungry, those who had little concern for real spiritual things, who were content with having position and a name without caring for the anointing, went on with Saul. You see that thing carried right through the Word. The Word divides as we have seen in the case of Moses. Here the anointing divides.

Go on with the Lord Jesus and you find that John 10 is the great dividing point. He speaks of Himself as the Door, He speaks of Himself as the Shepherd, and then He divides. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* And these statements raise a tremendous issue, an issue between Him and His sheep who have spiritual perception, who know Him, who are in spiritual union with Him; and the religious formalists who were around Him, those who held the place, the position, the name, the ecclesiastical power, the issue arose between the soul and the spirit in principle and the issue became a very clear one. And they refused Him. They took up stones to stone Him again; they said: *"He has a devil."* This was the attitude towards the anointed. And then it says that He departed and went away beyond Jordan and many came to Him there and believed on Him. You see it is the cave of Adullam, the same thing again, between what is of the anointing and what is not of the anointing even religiously. *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring ... and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."* Our translators have used two different words; it is most unfortunate and I cannot understand why in they got that twist with the clear Greek in front of them. The Lord never did say that there should be one fold and one shepherd. What is a fold? It is a contrivance you set up on the earth into which you gather all the sheep. Some organized arrangement for the accommodation of all the sheep you bring in. What the Lord said clearly is perfectly obvious. *"... that there should be one flock"*. And when the Lord speaks He is always true to eternal principles remember; an ever larger range of truth bound up with the Word than perhaps we recognise, for when those other sheep, the Gentile sheep were to be brought it was not putting Gentiles into a fold with Jews. It is one flock. He has destroyed in His death the difference between Gentiles and Jews and made one new heavenly Man. It is one flock; not an organization into which you bring all kinds of differences and make one fold, but it is one flock of one life. As we have said, the church is not composed of Gentiles and Jews. Gentiles and Jews and all nationalities have died as such. In the resurrection of Christ there is no difference. "There cannot be Jew and Greek" — it is one new Man. One flock not one fold. To get that one flock you have got to come into the realm of the heavenlies; that is Ephesians, into the realm of what is in the Spirit, and you cannot mix things, be earthly and heavenly, carnal and spiritual, the one flock represents one spiritual life, a heavenly life. That governs the way of things. That governed Moses, that governed David, that governed the Lord Jesus.

And then in Acts 22 that principle is brought out again several times in the life of Paul. The Lord said: *"Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me."* But he argues and debates the matter with the Lord: "But Lord, they know how I persecuted, all that I did, they are sure to take note of what I say." No, *"Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."* "They will not receive thee, for you it is a matter of going outside the camp. I will get My one new Man, what there is in the camp really inclined towards heavenly things will come out to you. What is outside this particular camp, those hungry for heavenly things, will be one on the basis of very real desire for what is of God, but you can do nothing here: *"Therefore let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."* That is David in Adullam. And there came to him those in need, distress and perplexity and they found what they needed there in the anointing and from that day there is a definite movement forward, there is a growing company and that is a step upward towards the throne. A distinct movement which will eventuate in the decline, breakdown and failure of what is not of God, steadily,

quietly that thing is brought to naught. Quietly, steadily, through suffering, patience, endurance what is of God gains strength, almost imperceptibly sometimes. Sometimes the training and discipline is so severe that it would seem to be anything but reaching God's end and yet all the discipline, all that through which David passes is only in the direction of the throne and imperceptibly through the suffering and sorrow he is moving steadily on, gaining power and with the decline of one thing and the spiritual increase of the other there is growing up a recognition. This is what we need, what we want. It is David, what David has, what David is in spiritual truth. And so at last they come to Hebron and they make David king in Hebron. That is fellowship. They sat down to eat and drink with David in Hebron. It is blessed fellowship of the sovereignty of the Spirit of heavenly things. And the last step is they make him king in Jerusalem; but it is a long history of secret growth of what is of God which tests people, tries people, sifts people, finds out whether they do mean business and are prepared to get real spiritual satisfaction and have what is of God, being all for God; whether they are prepared to accept rejection, suffer persecution and be put outside the camp or whether they are ready to let go the really spiritual, the heavenly just to have the formal and the office and the name. It is between these things right up to the end.

You can see a great deal more than I have said. This has meant a great deal more to me than it has meant to any one of you but I have only been able to indicate one or two things by these few points. Beloved, when it comes back to us in a practical way in an application what does it amount to? That if we are truly through Jordan, through Jabbok, through a complete handing up to death of everything that we are and have, that henceforth all our ideas and notions, conceptions, ambitions, plans, even about the work of the Lord and our ministry and all those things, hand it all up to the Lord and say: *"Now Lord in all sincerity and honesty from now I count on You to make my life and everything in it utterly conformed to the divine purpose in line with heavenly realities; and You can take out of every bit of ambition unreality, all that is personal. You can bring me completely and utterly to the last degree into things which are heavenly, which are according to Your mind. I do not know, I do not understand, but according to Your knowledge of the things, do it."* We come to a transaction like that and put ourselves in the Lord's hands and come under the anointing on that ground, well, the Lord will begin to show us things and lead us in ways which we never expected to take, ways that had never entered our thought or imagination before, new ways, strange ways, so different, but we shall see things. He will show us things and speak to us things from heaven, and there will arise a series of crises. Each bit of heavenly light will raise its own crisis; there may almost be a little bit of conflict about it and we shall have a time with the Lord in our own room, very deep, where a controversy goes on and the Lord will say to us when we have been fighting a bit and not getting anywhere: "What did you ask Me?" "What did you say, what was our understanding?" "Did you not say I could do all I wanted to do?" "Are you going to stop Me here?" We shall come to the place where we say, "Alright Lord I let go." We go on a bit and it involves something. It means the anointing is operating in a new way. Then more light will begin to break upon us and we shall see new things from the heavenly standpoint and perhaps another crisis will arise because another step is demanded — so different from what we ever intended and which brings us into collision with the things that are and perhaps involves rejection, misunderstanding and opposition. It may involve the loss of open doors, invitations, falling off of requests, all this sort of thing. It is another crisis. Are we going to accept it? We have another battle. You may get through again and move out into a still larger place of spiritual value and the Lord is speaking to us face to face — and so a series of crises and at last we shall come to the place where we say — it is no use, this whole thing, I see what it involves, I see what this carries with it, a final letting go and taking of my position for all God's will, so here goes. I no longer waver between these two things. And we step right out with God and we are at rest.

There are three rests in the Word of God. There is the rest we come into in salvation on the ground of the finished work of Christ and the peace of God fills our hearts. There is

the rest of the believer into which the believer comes when he accepts all the will of God for his life. There is no rest until that has taken place. And then there is the rest which comes for the people of God which they are going to enter later. This second rest has to do with the Lord's servants which settles the controversy; the rest that David enters into when he took his position and accepted the whole thing. At rest. Now beloved, that is the point to which everything heads up. Are you in rest? Am I in rest? Or have we got something inside in the way of a controversy. "I do not like that line of things, I do not want that way." "I can see what that is going to involve and if there is a way round that I will get round." Oh no, all the subtleties and cunning and whit of these hearts of ours to find a way round, a back-door out to evade the utterness of the issue. We simply come to the place where we started. You can say: "I am not going". Alright, well then the meaning of the anointing is not for you. You go on with Saul. So be frank and say: "I am going", but do not try and get round it; you will not have rest while you are between the two. Israel had no rest in the days of Ahab because of the meaning of that one little word that Elijah used: "*How long halt ye between two opinions*", and that word means, "limp": "*How long limp ye between two opinions*". That is a man who is maimed by being unsteady and there is no rest in that. Limping like a lame man between two things. Rest comes by being settled, by accepting what the Lord says and what the Lord presents, just accepting it. You may have a sort of rest by rejecting the whole thing. That is, that the Spirit of God has ceased to try and guide you where the Lord wanted you, and He will leave you alone, but oh, the Lord's purpose is the second rest, the rest for all the will of God.

I have said this not to create for you a merely formal issue of an external character. We can see what this may mean sooner or later in a practical way outwardly, but I want to get to the inward side of this thing. The question of no matter what it may involve outwardly, no matter what it may cost, no matter what it may lead to: "Am I with the Lord for all?" That is the point. Are we really going on in the way of the anointing to the full purpose of the anointing. There are no more pathetic sights in the eyes of heaven than history strewn with men who were undoubtedly anointed, called of God according to purpose, who have stopped short. I could mention half a dozen men who for a time mightily influenced lives because anointed, given opportunities which do not come in the way of everybody, and then at a point they stopped short and from that point their spiritual power has waned and you almost weep in your heart as you regard them and say, What a tragedy, what God might have done had they gone on. In a lesser way that applies to every one of us. We are anointed unto a purpose. Saul did not go on, and what a tragedy. David went on but at cost. What a glory!

The Lord give us grace to go on whatever the cost and to be very deliberate, not to see just how long we can hang out without a deliberate decision but to come to the place where in our hearts we know the Lord is calling us a deliberate step, right out with the Lord at all costs for His will and purpose.

Chapter 3 – Anointing implies Succession

Reading: 1 Kings 19:15-17.

There is one further factor that I have on my heart to mention of which to remind you.

We have thought a good deal about the oneness of the anointing but our thoughts in connection with the oneness of the anointing have for the most part been upon all the Lord's people at any one given time. That is, we have thought of all the Lord's people on the earth at this time who receive the Holy Spirit being made one by reason of the receiving of the one Spirit. But now I want that we should see another aspect of that oneness of the anointing and that is in the matter of all times. For the Holy Spirit is the same Holy Spirit in the first chapter of Genesis as He is in the last chapter of Revelation; He is the same Holy Spirit in the book of Exodus as He is in the letter to the Ephesians. He is the same Holy Spirit in Israel's history as He is in the history of the church. So that although forms may change with ages or dispensations, all who have at any time received the Holy Spirit and have come into a vital relationship with the Lord by the Holy Spirit are one. I want to just turn that round another way and point out that the Holy Spirit being the same Holy Spirit from the beginning all the way through to the end has one mind, and when He takes possession it is that that mind should have expression and that those who come under His government should come into His mind; that is His purpose, His object. So that no matter at what time in the history of the world we may come under the anointing of the Spirit, we come into that one mind and purpose of the Spirit, and the particular thought that is with me at this moment is that the anointing implies succession. Now you can take that thought into the Scriptures at once and you will find that anointing carries with it succession; that each one is anointed to succeed a previously anointed one and to take up under the anointing, the purpose for which the predecessor was anointed, and carry it on. I have read this fragment from 1 Kings 19 because that principle comes out there in a somewhat remarkable way, really in a unique way.

Here we find the Lord telling Elijah to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his place. Now prophets never did succeed one another. That is, the order of the prophets is not an order of succession. You do not find as a rule the prophets followed one another by succession. There is no succession of prophets, and therefore, you do not have the anointing of prophets as a general thing. You take the prophets and find them coming into their ministry and you have nothing of anointing. Amos will come up from his distant fields and these prophets simply appear on the scene and utter their message, undoubtedly in the power of the Spirit, unquestioningly under the government of the Holy Spirit, but you never find them set apart to their prophetic ministry by an act of anointing. There is no formal anointing of prophets because there is no succession of prophets, but when you find a breaking into that which is the general course of things, and you have one case where that rule is broken, it attracts your attention, it almost startles you and you say, here is something out of the ordinary, something unique and apart, extraordinary, and you are brought face to face with a principle. And you find that in the case of Elisha there was a definite succession, and that Elisha was to carry on the work of Elijah, and that the Spirit which was upon Elijah was to rest in twofold measure upon Elisha. So here you have the principle of succession brought in in a startling way into view. And you see the succession, an outstanding case, something by itself is constituted by anointing. Never again do you find the command to anoint a prophet, but here the fact that anointing is brought in carries with it that in this case succession is brought into view. That is not only interesting, but you see how it meets the principle that *anointing implies succession*. Now there is a further thing implied, and that is that succession is related to the testimony in a peculiar, direct way.

Now you see your steps. Anointing represents or carries with it succession. Succession is related to the testimony in a direct way. Now you look at the rest of this verse and you see what is in view there is Jehovah's jealousy for His testimony. There is a succession of anointing and the anointing is successive. Here are men who are anointed because the testimony has fallen out of its place, upon dishonour, and the Lord is acting anew through the anointing for dealing with that which is against the testimony in order to recover His testimony, "... *him that escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay*". And when we read the story of Jehu we wonder if Elisha had any work to do for undoubtedly Jehu yielded to the anointing very utterly. We know how he believed in mass movement in this matter by the zeal for the testimony of God which came out of the anointing. The principle is before us. We see it illustrated and we can see very clearly what anointing means. Now what is apostolic succession? It is the anointing. Nothing mechanical, hereditary; I mean this, the anointing which rests upon us, if we have the anointing, links us with all who have been in the succession of the Lord's testimony through all the ages, and it means that the whole testimony from Genesis up to this present position is handed to us by the anointing. The testimony is one, the Spirit is one, and by the anointing the end which the Spirit of God has been seeking to realize all the way through the ages is brought right into our lives and we are linked with the whole testimony of God through the ages to carry it forward. Rightly apprehended and understood, that would mean something very great to us if we really did grasp that spiritually. We have got insufficiently great conceptions of Christian life and service. Our apprehension of these matters is far too small and weak. We have not the great background of being called into fellowship with the Lord in life and into cooperation with Him in purpose. We have not sufficient background for all this.

I do want you to see the value of what I am saying. You remember when we started covering the ground in a general way, we said the anointing is not just for people whom we call missionaries and ministers, it is for people who work among pots and pans in kitchens and sculleries, for people who sweep stairs and rooms, work in factories and have to look after homes, people in offices, and in all the varied vocations of life where we are in the will of God; the anointing is for there. Not that in themselves, by themselves any of these things can be to the glory of God, but there is that spiritual value which can be given into all these things, and these things can be made like a vessel in which the Lord is manifested and expressed, so that the testimony comes into it, that there is spiritual victory back of it. It may be what we call the daily round and common task; that is, the routine of months and years of the same kind of life and work with no breaks of the extraordinary and unusual to give a spice to the thing. Yes, but in that there is the furnishing of an opportunity for the manifestation and expression of the grace of God, and into that plain, uninteresting, ordinary vessel of earthly vocation, something of the glory of the Lord can come. That is the testimony. It may be in conditions which are very adverse to our nature, provocative of irritability and impatience, and so on, something of the grace of God can come and be manifested and that is the testimony. And so into any kind of legitimate vocation there may be that added which is of the Lord, of grace, graciousness, patience, endurance, kindness, all these things; a development of the Spirit of God in us which is the testimony.

Someone has said that the only Christian life worthy of the name is the life God lives in us in Christ by the Holy Spirit. That is worthwhile. And that the Lord should live His life in us by the Spirit in any kind of vocation means the testimony of Jesus, and in that we shall find our opportunity for the glorifying of the Lord. Now we covered that general ground, that we need to be anointed to do any kind of work that the Lord had led us into and that we are in by the will of God, and we can be anointed for that. But what lifts that onto such a high level and will transfigure that is that the anointing does not mean we are just in that little circumscribed way helped of the Lord to do our work. It means the anointing links us immediately with the whole, full, complete testimony of God through all the ages from eternity to eternity, and if you find the anointing in your ordinary vocation, that anointing links you with the full testimony for it means succession. It

means that in the workshop, kitchen, office or school you are in the succession of the prophet Elisha, you are in the succession of all those who have been anointed; you have taken up their work. They in their different ways carried forward the testimony but it was only a difference in the way of carrying it forward, it was the same testimony that you and I are in, and the same Holy Spirit working to the same end. The anointing links us into the whole testimony from Abel onwards. Now that ought to make a great difference if we could go back to our work with that a real live matter in our hearts. I have to go what I might call my way, and you have to go your way. We have to scatter, live our lives and do our work in these different circumstances, and we all think of course, that our way is the hardest and our place is the more difficult. But it does not matter what it is or where it is, we may have the anointing, and having the anointing, I in my way, and you in your way, are linked in vitally, immediately, with the whole testimony and purpose by the Holy Spirit from that dateless time when the Holy Spirit took up the whole purpose of God to consummate it. That rests upon our seemingly detached, isolated, lonely lives and if we fail under the anointing wherever we are the testimony suffers in its wholeness, in its completeness in that measure. The testimony is one; the Spirit is one.

I do not know whether you are seeing it as I see it. It means something very great. It means there is nothing in the Lord that is detached, personal, separated or isolated. It means that everyone comes under the anointing of the Spirit and we may all come under that anointing, every child of God, whether you never take a meeting or give an address in your life as a child of God to live your life where God has put you and do the work which comes to you to be done in the place where God has put you, can have the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And having that anointing that you there alone, unknown, unseen, unheard of, are linked in with the whole testimony of God and are brought into the great succession of the apostles and prophets. That is tremendous. Now am I exaggerating or is this according to Scripture? Go to the Word with that and see if the anointing does not mean succession. That is, that the anointing meant the one who received it was anointed to take up the purpose of his predecessor. It may be his predecessor broke down at some point and he was anointed to take it up where it was broken down.

Saul broke down, David was anointed to take it up from that point. Elijah, yes, even Elijah broke down in this. "*What doest thou here, Elijah?*" (1 Kings 19:9). Elijah under Jezebel's threat has broken down. Well, Elisha must come along and be anointed to take up the work where Elijah has broken down. I do not mean that Elijah has utterly failed the Lord, but there has come a point from which the Lord could go on no further with Elijah and he must have a successor to take up the work, and Elisha comes in at that point. Well, the testimony has to be taken up from that point by the anointing which comes to everyone who receives that anointing afresh. We come into that anointing today, well, that links us with the testimony where it last stopped, and means we have to take it up where it last stopped and carry it on. God forbid that it should stop short of the full measure in us, that we should break down before our anointed purpose is completed. You and I are anointed to take up the testimony at the point where it has been left. And you notice through history God comes in again and again when the testimony has gone just so far. There may have been some delay, and the testimony has just been waiting there like the ark, and then the Lord gets another instrument and anoints that instrument to take up the testimony from that point and carry it on a further stage. That says a lot to my heart. If I really come under the anointing the Lord wants to carry His testimony a stage further through me, and that applies to you. And the vessel may be a collective vessel to carry the testimony on. It is succession the anointing carries with it in order that the testimony might be brought a stage further towards its fulness and finality. The Lord bring us into the true apostolic succession by the anointing to carry the testimony on.

Chapter 4 – The Suffering Side of the Anointing

Reading: 1 Samuel 27:1.

We have been occupied in this conference with the matter of the anointing of the Spirit and we have been learning a great deal in principle about the anointing in the life of David. We saw at the outset when David was anointed he was in contrast with his brethren, the men who were regarded as accounting for something, and he was left out, and what came to us was that it is the anointing which gives the value to a life, and not what that life is by nature either inherited or acquired. It is the anointing which makes for the value of any life, and that what David became as standing out in the whole of the Scriptures, the man after God's own heart, and the greatest of the kings, and the builder of the House of God, was because of the anointing and not because of anything that he was in himself. We gathered much from that and it is an abiding truth.

We saw in the next place that the anointing always draws out the adversary and that so soon after David was anointed, that evil spirit which had now become associated with Saul's life, sought the life of David, and the enemy was provoked by reason of this anointing. We saw that also in the case of the Lord Jesus, and in the case of the church at the beginning. The anointing is the explanation of the enemy's vehement animosity, hatred and opposition.

But we went on also to see that while the anointing provoked the enemy, and brings into conflict, it is the anointing which secures the ultimate triumph, which is the basis of the final victory, in spite of everything through which that anointing may lead us before we reach that final victory. We may have to wait, we may have to go through a lot, but having the anointing the victory is secured unto us as we go on in the anointing.

Then we saw further that the anointing not only led to opposition from the adversary, but it led to rejection among men. David passed through an extended period of being outside of the fellowship of the religious people of his day. It meant for him a place outside the camp because that anointing meant reality, and inside the camp there was unreality, and these two things cannot coexist. So the anointing meant for David a time of rejection and expulsion.

Then further, we saw that the anointing related to specific purpose. David was raised up and anointed for a purpose, and the whole purpose of David's life is seen realized in the building of the temple and the installing of the ark of the testimony at last in final rest. The anointing, therefore, was unto the bringing of the testimony to fulness, to finality, and the anointing is always related to the testimony, and the anointing brings us in some specific way into the one testimony of the Lord Jesus.

There have been many other phases of this thing which have occupied us, and there are as many more which have not occupied us. We have but this short time left to us and of all that might be said we could quite easily fill another week. I have been holding on to the Lord very strongly to know just what the fragment is with which to close, and I have just the one thought that I think the Lord wants to be said, and it happens to be not altogether the thing that I would most like to say!

It is connected with what comes in with 1 Samuel 27: "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines ...". "If I escape into the land of the Philistines I shall escape out of the hands of Saul". So we have one of those very common ways of satanic effort to defeat the purposes of God in a life, which method is always timed and adopted when that child of God is passing through a time of pressure and trial, a time when they are confronted with the cost of the step which they have taken, and of what is

involved on the suffering side in the anointing; when they become severely conscious that this God revealed way for them is a costly way, is at any rate in the meantime a way which is anything but easy to take. When it is clear that this path is leading into very real demands for the deepest death to all personal and worldly interests and ambitions; when all that is resting heavily upon the mind, weighing upon the heart and confronting the child of God so that the heart is really burdened and weighed down, then the enemy strikes his blow, lets loose his fiery darts, shoots his poisonous arrow. And what is it? A spirit of fear. A spirit of fear is a well-timed thing and an exceedingly venomous thing. I expect if the truth were known, more of the servants of God who have been called and anointed by God in relation to His high purposes have broken down and have passed through a period of defeat and shame, a period upon which they afterwards look back upon with the utmost remorse and regret, because they were overcome by a spirit of fear when what was involved in their calling was pressing upon them and making its demand.

It may be that some of us are here in that place. Some doubtless are rejoicing in that which the Lord has revealed and into which He has brought them, but it may be that some are seeing that this way is going to be a costly, painful way. This is going to mean suffering; this threatens to be a way of loss or denial in some directions. They are seeing, as David was seeing, that this way means rejection, this way means opposition and antagonism, this way means that they will be a target of the enemy and an object of opposition, persecution and ostracism from those who have not the vision that they have, the revelation that the Lord has given them. It may be that you are becoming aware of what is bound up with the course the Lord has been indicating in the way of the anointing, in the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus, and it may be that already a spirit of fear is beginning to work in your heart. Now a spirit of fear was shot, as it were, from the bow of the adversary, at David just at this point and it seemed to paralyse him. It seemed to numb all his wonted trust in the Lord, all that restful reliance upon God, all that strong faith and confidence in God which had marked him before, that magnificent dependence upon God displayed when he went out to meet the giant. It seemed to just paralyse all that confidence in God, this spirit of fear. The man who has been bold as a lion, who has taken great steps in the past in trust in God, the man who has committed himself to tremendous things in his faith in the Lord is now suddenly paralysed. That faith seems to have suddenly died, or become petrified, and you hear such a man as David, the killer of Goliath and the pursuer of the Philistines talking like this. *"There is nothing better ..."*. Think of that! *"There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines."* Nothing better than that! Oh what a drop. The words of the Lord to the church at Ephesus might well be addressed to David at this point: *"... consider from whence thou art fallen"*. There is nothing better than to escape into the land of the Philistines. The man who had been anointed to wipe out the Philistines, and under the anointing had destroyed their champion and scattered their hosts, now saying: *"There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines."* What a spirit of fear can do; what awful havoc a spirit of fear can work in us. As we begin to see where we are being taken by the way that we are following, or we are called to follow under the anointing. A spirit of fear! Well did Solomon say later: *"The fear of man brings a snare."* That was so in David's case. The snare was immediately followed because of the fear of man. He got into an awful snare as he went to Achish, king of Gath.

Now David's fear of Saul. We have seen what Saul stood for. Let us remind ourselves of that to see where we are. We have said Saul represented mere formality in the things of God. He had the name of king but he did not have the anointing now. *"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul"* it says. He had the name but not the anointing. He had the position but not the power. He had the following of men but he did not have the accompaniment of the Lord. He was there in the midst of the Lord's people exercising power over their lives but it was the power of man in the things of God, and not the power of God in the things of God. So that Saul represented that system of religious

things without the anointing. But oh that system is a big system. Saul is a big man and that system is a mighty system. It is not something to snap your fingers at. It can make it pretty hard for you; make things very difficult as David discovered. And it was in effect a fear of that system that paralysed David and led into this snare. It was that the thing which occupied the place of religious power and influence on this earth was threatening and attempting to curtail his life, to limit him, to crush him out, to make impossible his vision, and he came to the moment when in his heart he feared this and forgot that if a man is anointed of God, he eventually is destined under the very fact of that anointing, to be more than a match than the mightiest system without that anointing. He forgot that. You can see as you go through his life in the days of Saul, you can see that. It is beautiful; it is tremendous. Look at the man who had the position without the anointing, and look at the man who does not have the position, but has the anointing, and see where the Lord is. Why you have magnificent things. The man without the position, with the anointing, while his faith is in God is far above the man who has the position without the anointing. What was it these men of Gath said, these lords of the Philistines, to Achish when they saw David in the city? *"Is not this David the king, of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands?"* Well there is an invidious comparison. Saul his thousands; he has the position. David his ten thousands; he has not the position but he has the anointing. And David forgot that the anointing is everything and eventually the anointing is going to bring the anointed one to the place of ascendancy. The spirit of fear blinds us to the great inevitabilities of the anointing and takes account of the thing that is. It is not that we would ignore the thing that is, or that we would regard it as nothing for it can and it does make things very difficult, hard and bitter, and for a time it can make life a very hard and difficult thing for the true servant of God who is going to be true to God, to the anointing, and to the heavenly vision. And we have to accept that. But oh, the anointing is more than that; and it is an ill day when we forsake the level of the anointing because of the hardship and take a lower way to escape that hardship, and that is how it proved with David. Because he was afraid of Saul, in other words afraid of the religious system without the anointing, he fled to Achish, to Gath, to the land of the Philistines. And as we have studied the typical meaning of the Philistines in the Scriptures, you will remember this means that David left the line of separation because the line of separation meant for him suffering. He forsook the line of separation. The Philistines known as the uncircumcised Philistines are those who come within the territory of what is of God without the cross having been applied to cut off their flesh. The natural man in spiritual things; they are the Philistines. David, by the anointing, had been separated unto God from the life of nature and now he forsakes the ground of the anointing, the way of separation, and goes back onto the ground of the uncircumcised, the uncrucified, onto a Philistine level of life; that is, he comes down onto the ground of nature in order to find relief.

Now I am not condemning David without being myself in the same category. It is an easy thing to take up these faults and point them out and say hard things about them, but I doubt whether this is not true of every one of us in spirit at some time or other, when we have been brought face to face with the cost of the separated way, whether we have followed what was in our hearts or not, we in our hearts have often dropped down and left in heart the ground of the anointing, got into a state of fear and looked around for that which would correspond to Gath, and we have even contemplated the easier way of the natural life. That is, serving the Lord in our own way, making our own plans, carrying out our own ideas instead of those lines of absolute dependence upon God. This heavenly life which is such a trying life to the natural man who always wants to have things in his hands and to see, know, feel and have tangible evidence of things is so different from the life of faith. That is, where you never know from one hour to another what the Lord is going to require of you, where you will be. The life of faith is so much the "do not know" life. "Where are you going?" "I do not know." "What are you going to do?" "I do not know." The "do not know" man is the man of faith. Abraham, who lives in tents. "Abraham, where shall we find you next week?" "I do not know." "Where will you be

tomorrow Abraham?" "I do not know." "What are you going to do Abraham?" "I do not know." "Oh, you do not know anything; you are a strange fellow." "I do know the Lord will show me the next thing to do, and I do know the Lord will meet every need as it arises." "Well I do not know Abraham whether that is not better after all than to just have this life of nature without God at all." Oh yes, but you see the man of faith is very largely the "do not know" man in that earthly sense. The heavenly life is a life that is not pleasant to the flesh which does want to know all the time. This flesh of ours must know. But faith is faith, and it is not always knowing and seeing. But you see the drop down on the other life of material evidence, to come down to Philistine ground. We have all been tempted in that way and we have all (I should think this is true of anybody who has had any real movement with God), some time or other just entertained the thought perhaps, allowed the thought that there might be an easier way. Is it necessary after all that we should go on this difficult path?! Will not even the Lord allow us to take another way? Yes, put it how we may, but in spirit, in heart we have fallen. Many have actually fallen. I am so glad to notice that even an anointed man may make a mistake. To put it another way, the anointing does not guarantee infallibility. Do not think an anointed man is a perfect man in the final sense. The anointing is that he may be made perfect, and that through suffering. The Lord Jesus was made perfect through suffering, and that under the anointing.

Well, David forsook the path of power, when he went to Achish, to Gath, onto Philistine ground, and then he came into confusion and into shame so that even the Philistines despised him. Even the Philistines despised him! You know men of the world, men of the flesh, while they may oppose the man of the spirit and make it exceedingly hard for him, despise him if he comes down; they always do. That is the nature of human nature. It opposes the man who goes right out for God, but despises him if he stops. Even the Philistines despised David when he forsook the way of separation and came down onto their own level. What a terrible state of things. We do not gain anything by doing that. And then the awful side of this thing was even worse than that. It was that David was involved in almost fighting against the very people whom he was anointed to save. The Philistines went out against Israel and David was on the point of going out with them. He got involved in this thing. The lords of the Philistines had sufficient common sense and discernment to recognise that David after all was an Israelite at heart whatever he might be pretending; at heart he was an Israelite and for that reason he was not to be trusted. There would come a point when he would go out with them and what was true of him at heart would rise up and take the ascent and he would turn round on them. But David was involved in a most terrible situation by his act and that which he was anointed to do he almost was involved in destroying. You see where we may be landed if we do not go on with the Lord, if we allow the spirit of fear to dominate us. Even if confronted with the menace, the cost, the price of suffering if obedient to the way of God for us, we become seized with a spirit of fear because of the cost and allow that to govern our course and influence us in our conduct. The issue may be that we shall be found to be antagonizing the very thing we were anointed to do. That while God anointed us to do a certain thing we may be found undoing that very thing we were anointed to do. It is not that we would deliberately do that, or see that coming if we saw that coming we would go on with the Lord, but because we do not go on on account of the price, we find ourselves quite unexpectedly and almost unconsciously involved in a situation where we are directly against the very thing for which we were anointed. That is an awful outcome. I am saying all this to show how serious a matter it is not to go on with the Lord in the way He indicates even though the cost may be very great. And I speak to my own heart as much as to you.

(This week I have really been talking to myself in every message I have given. I have been thanking God it has come at this time. It has just come at the right time for me, and I am speaking out of my own heart to you, and there is no one in this gathering who needs to be told what I am saying tonight more than I do. I know all that this means, and for me the present crisis is one of a fresh acceptance of the price of going on

with the revelation of God, A fresh acceptance of the cost of being true to the vision and not seeking an easier way. Do not think I am throwing stones at you. You are getting it at any rate out of a man's own heart.)

We do not want to be found in a position like this, any of us. The Lord deliver us. David went to Achish and then, involved in this situation of seeking an easier path, as a part of it, he asked Achish for a city in which to live, and Achish gave him Ziklag. (There are a good many factors and features in this story I am passing over; you can study it and find more details.) One of the phases of the situation, we have the giving to David of Ziklag, the city for himself and his and that of the six hundred who were with him. Now while David was in this mess, away there in Ziklag the Amalakites made a raid on Ziklag; they burned the city with fire, carried away his wives and children and all those men who were with him. They left nothing but departed with everything, men, women, children, sheep, everything that they possessed, carried the whole lot off and when David came back he found everything gone. He lost everything that was precious to him. And then perhaps the most bitter drop in his cup was that the very men who had been so faithful and loyal to him turned upon him and talked of stoning him, and David was left a solitary man without a friend, having lost everything. Now you see that is zero. That is the consequence of entertaining a spirit of fear. Not much gain was there, when David said there was nothing better - it was a poor better. He lost all but one thing and that was his knowledge of God and his knowledge of God's faithfulness. That is a great thing to be left with. And they wept, he and his men, until they had no more power to weep. That is exhaustion; that is the end, you cannot get lower or deeper than that. Now the Lord had to bring David down to a fresh end; had to show him that if the price of the anointing is a great one, the price of losing the anointing may be infinitely greater; if the cost of going on with the Lord is a great one, the cost of not going on with the Lord is greater. He had to be shown that in order that he might lead God's people in the future, he had to learn these lessons very deeply and very truly, and so he was emptied out, poured out to the end, brought to death, to zero. And then at that point he remembered the Lord. He had nothing but the Lord. And it says: "*David encouraged himself in the Lord his God*", and then he called for Abiathar to bring the ephod and to enquire of the Lord whether he should pursue the Amalekites, and the Lord said, Pursue. We know he recovered all. When he returned to the Lord he recovered all. Then the wonderful thing about it is, at the time David was pursuing after the Amalekites, Saul was slain in Gilboa, While David was doing that another phase of history was developing yonder, and Saul was slain, and two days past before David heard that Saul was dead. Oh, the wonderful grace of God, the wonder of God's ways, the beauty of God's ways! He does not know what is happening, what God is doing for him; by his foolishness God is disciplining him, taking him through a time of adjustment, suffering, emptying him and bringing him to deep grief and pain because he has forsaken the way of the anointing. And while He is doing that with the man He is preparing the way to the throne for him yonder so that when the discipline is done the way is open; when the Lord has dealt with the man the way is straight forward. This is how the Lord works things together, and He does not tell us what He is doing. Supposing the Lord had said: "Now David you repent and I will give you at once a way to the throne"! But the Lord did not let him know anything of what was going on up there; he was outside of all other sovereign activities of God. God was dealing with him. We never know what the Lord is preparing for us when He is dealing with us in the depths. He is emptying us out, and showing us the folly of unfaithfulness, of not trusting Him, and allowing a spirit of fear, letting that thing work out to its bitter end. He knows what the issue of our chastening will be. He is working elsewhere to provide for the salutary results of our chastening.

So David, an emptied man who has nevertheless found the grace of God in the recovering of everything, comes back and after two days learns that Saul is dead. And they weep and mourn for Saul. You remember the story of the Amalekite who came and told David the story and how he had stood upon Saul and put an end to his miserable life, and thought that he would have been commending himself to David. David in the

magnificence of moral recovery made nothing of that, but that one should dare to put forth his hand to one who had been anointed of God, commanded him to be slain. They mourned and made great lamentation for Saul and Jonathan. Then David enquired of the Lord as to whether he should go up to any of the cities of Judah, and the Lord said: "Go up ... unto Hebron." And we know the beautiful story of Hebron, how they made David king in Hebron. From the depths to the heights, from the emptiness to the fulness; although another seven and a half years he had through which to pass before they, all Israel, made him king in Jerusalem, they made him king in Hebron. That is the next step, the one before the final step, and seems to speak of this.

There is a place where the Lord vindicates us here before we reign with Him there in the heavenly Jerusalem. There is a place for vindication of the faithful even here before they reach that place of glory. At any rate that has been so quite often. Hebron is the final step of vindication before the great vindication in the heavenly Jerusalem.

This is clear, that when David recovered himself in the Lord, came back to the Lord, seeing the folly of his course and knowing that it does not pay to try and have gain at the loss of the anointing, or ease and comfort by taking a lower way than the Lord has asked. It does not pay, it is the way of loss rather than gain, when that is recognized, and there is a weeping so that there is no more power to weep, there is a sorrow almost unto death, that is the way of recovery. Of course that way is not necessary for anybody. No one need go the way of Gath, Ziklag; that is an out of the way, that is a curve in the road and I am quite sure that David looked back upon that curve always with regret and sorrow. May we not have regrets. For us the straight way is now: "*I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*" That is the straight way. May we take the straight way, go right on with the Lord seeking grace that whatever the cost is, whatever is involved, we will have no coming down onto the Philistine level of life, no Gaths and no Ziklags. That is the way of sorrow. The other may be the way of suffering, but the suffering way need not be the way of sorrow. The Lord, if He leads the way of suffering can make it the way of deep inward joy and peace, and that is better than the way of inward sorrow and grief.

I think the Lord will help us to see what He means by all this. May we have grace to accept it.

Chapter 5 – Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers Arising Out of the Conference on "The Anointing"

Q. *Are we not to call the local gathering a church, though the word church is used often in Acts and Revelation as far as I can understand, in this respect, and the word assembly is used little?*

A. Now that question arises probably through the way in which I spoke of the matter. I was speaking of the nature of the church, the Body of Christ, as a spiritual and heavenly thing and then I went on and changed the word and said, the local assembly in the thought of God is to be a microcosm of the universal church, and probably it is my change of word that has provoked that question.

I may remind you that in Hebrews 12 we are told that we are come to the church of the living God: *"to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven ..."*. The word there, the terms are synonymous terms. Not only that but they are the same word in the Greek. More often the Greek word is translated *church* than *assembly*, but it is translated in both ways. You have in Acts, for instance, the Greek word *ecclesia* translated assembly three times in Acts 19 (verses 32,39,41). It can be just as well translated church. When we speak of the local assembly we simply mean the local representation of the church, that is, the gathering of those who are a part of the whole church.

I think that question probably also came up because of what I said about wrong phraseology which is used when we hear speak of the African church, the Chinese church, the English church and any other national church you like to mention. It is wrong phraseology to speak in that way. The New Testament knows nothing of that kind of phraseology. One church, but the local assembly which represents the general assembly of the firstborn ones those whose names are enrolled in heaven.

Q. *Has Baptism taken the place of circumcision? Are we to leave children and do nothing to them until they are grown up?*

A. These are two questions in one.

Has baptism taken the place of circumcision? That question really involves in it, where does infant baptism come in? If baptism has taken the place of circumcision then it is obviously for infants. You see the point of the question.

I want to say in the first place that baptism and circumcision are certainly analogous signs and testimonies. They do mean the same thing but that is the strongest argument against infant baptism that can possibly be found. It is so often thought to be the argument for infant baptism, but it is just the contrary. You cannot find a better ground for rejecting the baptism of innocent babes than to recognize circumcision and baptism are analogous. In what way is that so?

Abraham, on the ground of his faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness became the federal head of a seed to which the promises were secured in him. All the promises were secured to that seed in Abraham because of his faith which was accounted to him for righteousness and he therefore became the federal head of that seed. Now every male child born therefore into the family of Abraham as federal head became an inheritor of the promises in Abraham, and the sign and seal of that was circumcision. That was the sign of their inheriting the promises in their federal head because they were born into the family of Abraham and were definitely and positively of his Abraham's seed.

The Lord Jesus, by reason of the obedience of faith, became the federal head of a new race, was made the federal head of a seed to whom all the promises of God are secured in Christ: *"All the promises of God in him are yea and in him Amen."* All the promises of God are secured in Christ as federal head of a new race. Everyone born into Jesus Christ, born of Christ, becoming the seed of Christ by being begotten of God, born from above, inherits the promises, becomes a part of the new family. The testimony to that is baptism. Can an infant be born again? Can an innocent babe be born from above? Can an innocent babe die, be buried and be raised again, declaring by faith identification with their federal head? Now you see the teaching of the New Testament is that the babes in Christ are the people who exercise intelligent faith in relation to Him. To grown up men and women He says: *"Except ye turn and become as little children ..."*. To a ruler of the Jews He will say: *"Ye must be born again"*, and then: *"To as many as received Him, to them gave he the right to become children of God even to them that believe on his name."* *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"*.

The testimony to that is baptism. So you see that really the correspondence between circumcision and baptism is an argument rather against than for baptism of infants, for baptism represents our entering into our federal head; we are baptized into Christ, coming into our federal head, and we become a seed of a new race, a new creation. Therefore it is always: *"Believe and be baptized."* It is the exercise of faith. Well no infant can do that.

The second half of that question of course is a very proper question. *Are we to do nothing for children till they are grown up?* I do not think so. But I certainly do not think we are to put them in a false position. We do dedicate our children to the Lord. Believers do present their children to the Lord in infancy. We bring them into the assembly, into the presence of the Lord's people and give them to the Lord, and there in the midst of the congregation call upon Him that we as parents may have wisdom and grace and all that is required to influence them spiritually in the days of their innocence, and that the Lord Himself will graciously watch over them and show His concern for them until the day in which they themselves shall intelligently take their position with Him.

Q. The next question relates to *the selecting by the brethren as elders, as representatives in the House of God*. That is how the question is put and there are other questions which arise in connection with that as to order and so on. I want to answer that question in a general way which will gather up everything else into it. The form of the question does give me my jumping-off point.

A. Elders selected by the brethren as representatives. Now we can say immediately that that idea is foreign to the New Testament. In the New Testament there is no such thing as selecting elders by the brethren. Deacons were appointed. After prayer and fasting they were chosen and appointed and even that by special divine guidance. Their office was of serving tables. They came up when the apostles were so pressed with the rapid and tremendous growth of that time they found spiritual instruction and prayer, and ministry of the Word making such tremendous demands upon them that practical matters of everyday life in the domestic interests of individuals was impossible of their attention. They felt the need of some brethren who could attend to those matters in a right way, and even that under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so deacons were prayerfully sought for, chosen and appointed. But elders were never selected in this way, never chosen, never voted for. Even apostles did not select leaders and the church most certainly never did. The whole principle of leadership throughout the Word and New Testament is the principle of spiritual position.

You will remember that the book of Numbers corresponds to the book of Acts, especially in connection with the coming into being of local assemblies. We might say that is what

arose from the ministry of the apostle Paul. In the book of Numbers you have the ordering of the whole house of Israel and the order was this. Here is the tent of meeting, which representatively or typically stands for all Israel. They are gathered typically there. The tent speaks of all Israel gathered into Christ. Moses is there at the door of the tent of meeting. He is a type of Christ. Now then, from all the tribes there come representative members, they are called the heads of fathers' houses and princes in Israel. They come from their local assemblies to the centre and they receive through Moses instruction for their local assembly. The local assembly is governed from the centre. It is not so many local assemblies living a detached life and carrying on their own way and being a law unto themselves. All the local assemblies are centralized in the one Body as represented by the tent of meeting, and in the one Person the Lord Jesus, as represented by Moses as well as all that comprised the tabernacle. "*As the body is one, and hath many members ... so also is (the) Christ*". And the local assemblies are gathered into the one there at the centre, and as a part of the one they all are governed by their head. The Head of the church which is Christ. Christ is the Centre and they are governed through what we may call subheads. That headship is a sub-headship to the Headship of the Lord Jesus. But it is not just an official, ecclesiastical thing, it is a representative thing, and those heads of fathers' houses and princes in Israel were never appointed. The strange thing about it is that you find them existing but you never hear of them being made heads of fathers' houses or princes, but you take note of the fact that they are there. That is a principle you see, that they are there. The very names convey true spiritual principles. What are the heads of fathers' houses? What is headship? What is the Headship of the Lord Jesus from whom every kind of headship comes? It is not just official; it is not just ecclesiastical. It is not just that He was voted for and put in His position. Neither is it that He was just chosen and put in His position. His Headship is in virtue of His spiritual and moral qualities. He humbled Himself, emptied Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, was found in fashion as a man, became obedient even unto the death of the cross, wherefore, for this reason God has highly exalted Him and given Him a Name above every name etc.

Take the thought into Ephesians out of Philippians and you have the same truth. God has given Him to be Head over all things to the church which is His Body, and He was given that on the ground and in virtue of the work in the cross and His spiritual and moral virtues. Headship is spiritual and moral. It rests upon what a man is in his spiritual life. Heads of fathers' houses were that. Princes in Israel. What does that mean? Two things. A prince firstly is a man of dignity, that is, he carries the name, the right. We know that there is nothing more tragic than for a prince to be without dignity. The name itself carried with it the idea of dignity. And the other thing which we expect to be associated with princes is also wealth. So that princes in Israel were men of dignity who could be looked up to, trusted in, and would never do a low or mean thing, men who could be honoured; and they were men of wealth. Carry that into the New Testament and you find the spiritual principles. An elder is only another word for overseer (In the Greek it is the same word as bishop, elder, overseer). They are men of spiritual and moral qualities. They are men of spiritual dignity and they are men of spiritual wealth who have something to give for the enrichment of the House of the Lord. They have got spiritual means to give away. You cannot make men like that officially. You cannot officially make a man dignified, morally elevated. You cannot by an official act make a man of spiritual wealth and means. You see that is an ecclesiastical system, merely mechanical, and falls far below what it is intended to represent. When that comes in later in post New Testament times the whole position is changed and we have what we have had all these centuries.

New Testament elders are not made, they are recognized, and on the ground of being recognized they are attested, they are declared. When Paul appointed elders in all the churches, it was not that he was going round in an official way looking for people to fill the office. He was taking account of men in those places who fulfilled these conditions. Men of moral and spiritual value. Men who had spiritual dignity to whom the assemblies

could look up and in whom the assemblies would have confidence, and men who had the means to give, something for the enrichment of the saints. That is the ministry of the New Testament. That is leadership in the New Testament. You can see what Paul says to Timothy about it. See what Paul stipulates as to what a leader, an elder should be and should not be. Very precise. He will tell you quite frankly that if a man has not the moral government of his own family he is disqualified from being an overseer. If he has not his children in subjection, how can he be in dignity? It is indignity for a man to be under the thumb of his family, his own children. And there are other things which Paul speaks about which bring moral quality into view, and he says that these are the grounds upon which the ministry rests. You can never choose in the official sense to make elders. Even Paul and Barnabas, two delightful men, had to be made subject to that test. Called of God, chosen from eternity, elect vessels; they had to go into the assembly at Antioch and move as ordinary members of that assembly for twelve months at least. The Holy Spirit said: "*Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" And when the Holy Spirit said: "*Separate Me...*" those men were quite ready to say, Yes these men have been in our midst and we have seen and proved them and they have something to give, and we are not able to say to the Holy Spirit these men count for nothing, etc. They recognized the value of these men and that they were spiritual and moral princes in Israel and they were let go. The Lord maintains His laws in His House, governed by spiritual and moral principles. Leadership is a representative thing.

Come to the seven churches in Asia and you find that the stars are the ministers, the angels of the churches. They may have been actual men but we are not told, but we do know this that those angels were representatives of those assemblies and were responsible morally and spiritually for the assemblies and they were so closely representative that the assembly and the elder were one. That is, that the whole assembly lost their place and their testimony unless certain things happened, certain changes were made. The state of the assembly is gathered up into the representative of the assembly, which means surely that the thing cannot be just an official order, it is a spiritual state, a moral condition. There are a good many other things that come up in connection with leadership and oversight in the New Testament but they are outside of the range of the question.

For instance, we never have a *single* elder in any New Testament assembly. One minister is not the New Testament order. It is always plural when dealing with elders in the assembly. One man ministry, control, and government is contrary to the New Testament. The Lord does not set a man up as a Pope even in the local assembly. The corporate nature of the assembly demands fellowship, cooperation. All this makes a tremendous clash with things as we know them today. I know what a serious responsibility rests upon anyone who says things like this and we may be involving one another in serious difficulties but we must be governed by the Word of God. We must have everything ruled by the Word of God and I leave you to go to the Word and see if these things are so. May we be emancipated from anything less than the Lord's full thought and brought into His thought. Some of us have to ask how on earth we got into the ministry. Did we take it up as some office or position and then get an official appointment, or did we move into it under the divine anointing and others had to take account that God had given us spiritual and moral qualities in His House which constituted us heads of fathers' houses. Some of us have had to let go entirely the old order of things and come back and accept the New Testament order, and we found it to be the most blessed thing.

A further question concerning the Spirit-filled life and its effect upon the physical body.

Q. *Is it not bad for the nervous system?*

This is a good question and gives some opportunities for saying some things worth saying. If I were to read you the question as it is exactly put includes this thought: what is called the Spirit-filled life has had the effect in many cases of destroying the whole of the nervous system and making nervous wrecks. That gives me a magnificent

opportunity, for I want to say that that is not the Spirit-filled life. I do not overlook the fact that spiritual work takes its toll in the physical realm. It did with the Lord Jesus; it did with Paul and it does, but therein comes the wonderful renewing of the Spirit. In that realm of course there has to be a place left us made for the Holy Spirit to do the leading in all matters of service and that we must not presume upon the Holy Spirit. When all these particular considerations are heeded, the Spirit-filled life does not make nervous wrecks. There are multitudes of people, and I have met a great many more of them, who believe that they have had a baptism of the Holy Spirit and been filled with the Holy Spirit which has carried them to such a degree that eventually they have been left both mental and physical wrecks, and that is a false baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therein is the tremendous difference which we have pointed out this week and which can never be emphasized too much, between the soul and spirit. If we get out in a great soulish, psychical drive, stimulus, and we begin to work in the realm of our souls we will be nervous wrecks. There is no doubt about it. But to work from our spirit, although our soul may be and will be engaged and we shall know tiredness of mind and this because the mind is a part of the soul, tiredness of the nervous system, that is a part of the soul, we shall know the need for quietness and renewal in every part, there is the basis of a wonderful renewal physically. We get all our renewing from the Lord through our spirit and so often it works in the opposite direction that if we labour in our souls merely and strain our souls the end of the labour is usually exhaustion. If our souls are drawn out and become the means and resources of our activity the end is exhaustion, but if we are working in our spirit very often we start tired and finish up in full life. Some of us have proved this by experience. To move in the spirit is to have all the life necessary for the demands. But we have to be led of the Spirit to be used of the Spirit. The genuine Spirit-filled life is a life of renewal. It does not dispense with the need for rest and the Lord requires that we should rest and be quiet sometimes. But to work in the Spirit means that at any given moment we can be ready to fulfil anything the Lord requires. I believe the order is: if we are walking in the Spirit the older we get the younger we grow.

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I have said that John 17 was fulfilled at Calvary, the prayer that they all might be one". That prayer was answered at Calvary and in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus the one Body is brought into being, and in Him in heaven all the saints are one and they never can be more one than they are in Him. That oneness exists deeper than all the distinctions and divisions which are a part of the old creation, the natural man. It is very often our natural judgments of one another or of truth, our likes and dislikes. These are the things that bring about outward divisions. But if we are children of God there is something in every one of us that is all of a piece, that is, one nature in all believers, and that oneness can never be added to, it is perfect, and when at last all of nature finally falls away there will be the manifestation of a oneness which has existed all the way through. My statement that the prayer of John 17 was answered raises this question.

Where do such injunctions as "*Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit*" come in? Is it because life here should be a testimony to what is real in heaven? You cannot have a more perfect answer.

It is just that. Here we are called upon to represent the heavenly realities, to testify to them, and therefore we must endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. It is made. It exists. It is perfect in Christ. Our diligence must be that it shall not be broken. That is, that in Spirit there shall be no break. We must give diligence to keep what the Lord has made. That will be done in a multitude of ways, but the truth is that we are not here to try and attain unto something or to create something but we are here in relation to something that has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus, and the testimony is not the testimony of words but of life.

I have often said that the devil's persistent and never abandoned effort to bring division among the Lord's people is his way of striking at the final work of the cross. What he is after is to strike a blow at what Christ has done, at what is true in Christ, and this is one part of that. Christ's accomplished, finished work has seen the whole Body secured in Himself on one Spirit, one life, one fellowship. The enemy's effort is to bring division and set up on earth a contradiction to that work and make men say that the work of Christ was all futile. That sort of thing may keep men from Christ. We have to stand in the place where that argument of the devil is effectively resisted and his work is brought to nought. We do that when we give diligence to preserve the unity of the Spirit.

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Q. *Are all born again children of God in the Body? It seems they must be as sharers of the one life but what happens if they are not functioning?*

A. The answer to that can only be according to the measure of light I have. As I have looked at the Word carefully with that question often before me, remembering that some have held and do hold very definitely that all born again ones are not in the Body of Christ, that the Body of Christ is a distinct order, one has to look at the thing carefully and prayerfully. As far as I have light on the matter I must conclude that all born again ones are in the Body of Christ. Even to carnal Corinthians the apostle says: "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ...*". That is, of course, only half of the question and that is according to the light I have. I give it to you as what I feel to be true, that all truly born again ones are members of Christ; they are baptized into Christ and Christ is one with all His members. I do not see the possibility of being baptized into Christ and there to be another Christ. All kinds of differences arise when you introduce questions of this kind.

The other half of the question is important. *What happens if they are not functioning?* That raises this question that there is a difference in the Body of Christ between the members. Some are functioning members and some are non-functioning members. We must remember the object for which the Body is called. What is the Body meant to be in the eternal purpose of God, the eternal thought of God? Two things in one. One is that it should be eternally to Christ just what our physical bodies are to ourselves. That is the means by which we express ourselves. I have a hearty feeling towards you and I get hold of your hand and my body helps me to express that feeling. The body is the means of expressing the inner self. The Body of Christ is the means for His Self-expression for eternity. What Christ is will be revealed through the Body. That is what it is called for.

The other thing is the official side; not only for the manifestation of His spiritual and moral glories and virtues but for the administration of the universe. He is going to be Head over all things and Head over all principality and power and He is going to rule as the Centre of this universe; but not merely as an isolated Person. His administration of this universe is intended to be through the Body the church. That was the calling with which we are called in Christ. It is clear that on both these matters there are many in Christ who are not attaining, they are not going on with the Lord, they are not growing. Many are not obedient to the light the Lord gives them. Many refuse truth which the Lord imparts to them, hold back and will not pay the price. That has the result that they are immature. What is spiritual immaturity? Just the limiting of the measure of Christ. Maturity is the large measure of Christ; we have come to a full measure of Christ. Immaturity is a limited measure of Christ. Then for eternity there will be members of the Body who only show a small measure of the glory of Christ. On the other hand it means they will have a much lesser place in the administration and government of His eternal kingdom than others. Inasmuch as the Lord must and will have His thought realized, and the whole Body will not fall short, there will be a company, a part of the Body which will come right through to His full thought, and they in the New Testament are called the overcomers. The overcomers are saints in the midst of saints, a company of believers,

and that company is seen first to come to the throne, to come to take the place in the heavenlies now occupied by the powers of darkness. Revelation 12 is the overcome's company. This company having got to the Throne involves the hurling down of Satan from the heavenlies to the earth because that company has taken the place of government with the Lord in the throne. So that there is a difference in the Body. I am not saying that the Body is the only company of saved people that will be in heaven. The Body is finished with this dispensation in the manifestation of Christ. There may be some saved after that, and if we are to take the figurative thing in the New Testament there will be others who are not of the Body for the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the church, is to be that in the light of which the nations that are saved are to walk. The Body is like the metropolis of the world, the governmental seat and centre of the universal reign of the Lord Jesus, and it will govern all the rest.

But in Jerusalem of old there was a pivotal place, Mount Zion, and it was there that the throne was; and if we use the figure again, there are those outside the City, outside the Body. There is the general Body as represented by the Body, and there is Mount Zion, the seat where the overcomers are with their Lord in fulness. I believe that is what Paul had in mind when he wrote Philippians 3. That for which he was reaching out with all his being was to come to the fulness of the Lord. "*That I may gain Christ and be found in Him*". He was reaching out for the fulness of Christ, and he saw that fulness of Christ brought him to a special position. The prize was twofold: the fullest possible measure of the glory of Christ, and the highest possible position with Christ in that glory in government. The question positively arises that being saved, you may yet be called unto something, but may miss it. There is not only a being saved and becoming a child of God but there is becoming a son of God. Paul makes the distinction very clear. A child is one who is of the family. A son is one who has come to maturity and therefore has the inheritance, and what Paul emphasizes in effect is that you may be a child but not attain unto sonship, you may be in the family but miss the inheritance by not growing up. Let us go on to full growth: the full measure of Christ in the glory and the place with Him in government and administration. It is a matter of degree in the Body of Christ. The Lord wants all the members to come to maturity, but the fact is revealed that in spite of all the Lord's provision, all the members will not come to fulness, but He has provided for it in every way.