

All Messages Compiled from January, 2015

Finding Your Purpose by Following Your Heart, Heaven Talk

January 3, 2015



Ezekiel: How are you? (to Clare)

Clare: (laughs) A little frazzled from trying to get this room together. We're going to get a real studio going here pretty soon.

Ezekiel: All right!

Clare: It's only taken us three hours to set up for this! Well, tonight I just want to mention that we have people who've been writing in to us who feel very lost right now. They need direction for their life. We've been praying about it and I really felt the Holy Spirit nudging me this morning to do a "Heaven Talk" on this subject, so we can give you some things to consider. And the reason why is because I think both of us have found our life path and are very happy in the ministry that the Lord has given us, and the life that He's given us. BUT, He sure writes straight with crooked lines! (laughs)

Ezekiel: It takes a while!

Clare: Oh my gosh! It's only been, basically, 30 years. Ah, 22 years, 24 years of following Him. Someone wrote us and asked us for a word for the New Year, and I wrote back to them and said "Follow your heart." And that's what this is all about, because Jesus dwells in our heart. And if we listen to the movement of the Lord in our heart, then we can't go wrong. If He tells us what direction we're going and how it's going to end, we tend to try to engineer the path ourselves. But rather than that, He tells us little bits at a time. And He asks us to be lovingly obedient. Sometimes it looks like we're going nowhere and doing nothing, and sometimes that is the most productive time in our lives. And I think that you'd agree with me, maybe, that contentment and peace are really key.

Ezekiel: Yes, that's a good indicator.

Clare: OK, so I'm going to ask you some questions.

Ezekiel: It's interview time.

Clare: So, how long have you been a Christian?

Ezekiel: Oh, gosh, almost 30-something years.

Clare: OK. So, when did you begin to feel deeply dissatisfied with your life?

Ezekiel: Well, you know, I came to the Lord in 1985, I was about 25 years old, something like that. I had the honeymoon thing, like we always do, for a good year - maybe two years. But after having worked in ministry: inner-city and mission work, and also living in Christian community settings, I just felt that

there was something more. I really longed for a deeper, more intimate walk with the Lord, as much as ministry, if not more so.

Clare: Yeah, I know that you were in ministry for a while before we met. Was that deeply satisfying for you? Did you feel that that was your path and you were fulfilling something?

Ezekiel: Well, you know, it was at the time. I think if I look at it, it's almost like there are phases.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: This was like the born-again experience and the afterglow and the first days, weeks and months and few years of ministry. As a singer, and songwriter, visiting different churches and outreaches – gosh, I was on top of the world! I could sing my heart out to the Lord and try to draw people into that relationship with Him.

Clare: And I have to say, you really did a wonderful job with that. I remember in Arkansas when he would come up and sing a song, I was always so glad! Because we were checking out the Catholic Church at the time, and he would come during the Offertory and sing a song, and the anointing was so strong. I felt the Lord so strongly – it was beautiful. In fact, I started praying for you then, just as a brother, praying for you that you would find a way to be in full-time ministry instead of having to – I guess you were working for the Health Department?

Ezekiel: That's a good point to bring up – yeah, you know we don't always, as you know, just jump right into the mission field or ministry or whatever. But we kind of have to make our tents along the way, especially when we first get started. So it's like an IBM shirt and tie one day and then on my time off and weekends, I'd just kind of have my mission duds on or whatever.

Clare: So, that was a phase and that's the "write straight with crooked lines" part – that was a phase. I remember you began, even in that position, you were feeling dissatisfied with your life. You felt like there was more.

Ezekiel: Yeah, again, not only did I want to be in full-time, full-time ministry – I wanted to be in full-time, full-time fellowship with the Lord.

Clare: In love with Him full-time!

Ezekiel: I wanted to spend more time with Him.

Clare: Without distraction – yeah.

Ezekiel: Without having to stop for this and be interrupted by that. I really wanted some "tuck in" time.

Clare: And you felt that in your heart, you felt that drawing you in your heart.

Ezekiel: Yeah, deeply.

Clare: It's interesting, because when we got married, he tried six ways from Sunday, however you say it, to get a job, to do some kind of work to bring money in. And the Lord simply would not open a door for

him. The Lord would not allow it. He didn't want to really do it, but then he did want to do it. So, then he'd make his best effort to get a job, but the Lord would always snafu it somehow.

Ezekiel: And yet, ministry opportunities began to come in more and more themselves. By the kindness of good hearts, we were able to live a simple life, but a contented life. Peaceful life.

Clare: Yeah. So how would you say the Lord guided you during that time? To make a decision? For instance, when we finally got together – because, I had absolutely no interest in my brother other than helping him with his career in music or with his ministry in music. I had my own things going on that I was doing. But there came a time, after about two years, that the Lord called us to be together.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: And He opened our eyes. We didn't know for a long time – we were just friends. But, when you kind of made the plunge, because you had to leave your old life behind. How were you guided in doing that?

Ezekiel: Well first of all, the break from the church body, typical church body, and friends, family, whatever, the familiar – the Lord began to really... it's interesting - to begin to call me, like He called Ezekiel. By name! And I didn't put two and two together for a few years. But I remember every day, every morning and every night, He would give me some instruction from the Scriptures. "Son of Man, do this, do that" . . . Ezekiel was a prophet of signs and the Lord would tell him "lay on your side for this many days" or "cut your whiskers and run through them with a sword" or whatever, you know. And I remember the last day, I knew the Lord was calling me to leave, and family, friends and church family can be V-E-R-Y L-O-V-I-N-G. (Holds himself in extremely tight, take-your-breath-away hug). To the point of NOT-LET-GO loving.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: And even scandalized – the demons get in there. "What's he running from?" "What's she doing?" You know, weird stuff.

Clare: It was a radical move, believe me, and in front of the whole community.

Ezekiel: The Saturday night, before the Sunday when I left, I remember one thing I did. I just took a little short walk down the road and back. And I thought, "I wonder what it's like to take nothing for the journey?" And I had a couple dollars in my pocket, and I just took them out and threw them away. I just pitched them!

Clare: Well, before you did that though, after Mass ended you walked out . . .

Ezekiel: I was going to say, that night the Lord gave me a Scripture from Ezekiel "*Son of man, cut a hole in the wall and walk through it as they are looking on.*" And I just knew, somehow He gave me an understanding that I was to go to the service the next morning, play the music. When everything was finished after communion time and toward the ending prayer, literally just walk out in the midst of them. And normally people would say "Hey, Brother, how you doing?" and people want to chitchat and whatever. And I remember, it was almost like a holy numbness that was over me.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: I got up from my seat, I walked down the center aisle. Just like I was floating almost. And walked right to the back of the church. And I remember different people . . . (reaching out with arm) “Brother, brother, oh hi.” And it was like – I just couldn’t greet anyone along the way so to speak.

Clare: Yeah, yeah. Greet no one along the way.

Ezekiel: I had to just – I felt compelled to just keep walking. And I didn’t know really, I thought maybe I’d just walk to Mexico or something. I had no idea! Never done anything like this in my life. Left my house, left my car, left my job. Left everything. Sent the notice in later, whatever. But just literally, left.

Clare: That was huge, that was like diving off of a canyon wall. And hoping you landed in very deep water, very deep pool of water.

Ezekiel: And I gotta admit – you know, I was walking down this road. And I remember one last person in the parking lot “Brother, what are you doing?” and I said, “Just doing what the Lord said. I’m just walking!” Everybody thought I’d gone loop-de-loop nuts.

But I’m walking down the road, and she and I had been friends for a couple of years. Brother and sister. But even she didn’t know what was going on. I’m probably a couple of miles up the road and I hear this car kind of come up behind and ease off to the shoulder.

I hear this soft voice “Brother? Brother, are you OK?”

And I look over and I said “Yeah, I guess so.”

“Well, what are you doing?”

I said, “Well I’m walking.”

“Where you walking to?”

“I don’t know, the Lord just told me to walk.”

And she said, “Well, can you take a ride?”

And I said, “Sure.”

And we ended out going to the Buffalo River National Park and got some ice cream on the way.

And I didn’t know it, but the Lord had told her to get a little room ready down the hill from where they lived. I mean, this is “hillbilly” Arkansas. Ozark Mountains.

Clare: Dogpatch, Arkansas

Ezekiel: Li’l Abner stuff.

Clare: Can anything good come from Dogpatch? (both laugh)

Ezekiel: You know, I go to see this little shop she has with sawdust floors and trees and all this . . .

Clare: The rocks cry out.

Ezekiel: All this Christian art and painting and weaving . .

Clare: Photography

Ezekiel: And she says, “Let me show you something”. I walked into this beautifully swept little hermitage room, like a little room in a little cabin, kind of off to the back and the side. Wood stove, floor

neatly swept, neatly made little bed, little wash basin, little table, and a simple cross on the wall. And I just saw this and thought, “Oh, this is all I wanted. Just a place where I could tuck in and be with You, Lord.”

Well of course, time went on and it was funny – I started having dreams at night about my Sister, as a friend, you know. And in the dreams, she would seem a little friendlier than friend. And I would wake up and “In the name of Jesus, that’s my sister! Go away!”

So, I’d try to stay there and be faithful to the Lord. I figured I’d be an old . . . who knows!

Clare: Be leaving for Mexico.

Ezekiel: I didn’t know! I just figured – I had no inkling. Our dads, her brothers, her sisters, whoever - they kind of flip out and wonder, “Well, what are you doing and where are you going? Are you going to have insurance?” I didn’t know, I just wanted the Lord and I didn’t care about anything else at that point. You know, either these words are true in these Scriptures and I’m going to go for it... or I’m not. Because I had begun to feel insulated and lukewarm and too comfortable.

Clare: Too comfortable. Yeah. And then there was, I think you mentioned, there was a sense of something really missing in your life. Some kind of depth, really, really missing. Even as a Christian – I mean... here you’re a Christian, you know the Lord, you’re writing beautiful, intimate songs about the Lord, but still there was a . . .

Ezekiel: There was a deep calling unto deep. I mean, there was something that I couldn’t explain. I knew a lot of it was wrapped up in the Song of Solomon. The Song of Songs – that deep, intimate spousal relationship with the Lord. I know that might sound strange for men, but there was – I know that the Lord created us out of love. Love gives itself away by its nature. But it wants to be returned and received.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: And many of you know what it’s like to love the Lord so much you just wish you could meld together and just be one with Him somehow. And I wanted that, I needed that, I couldn’t live without it. I knew I couldn’t survive without it.

Clare: And his secular job was an environment that was against that and the secular job really got in the way of that calling. That deep calling unto deep in his heart. And you know, this is one of the things I’m going to say is super important in discovering who you are in the Lord and what your mission is. There has to be a relentless commitment to following your heart and to following the Lord, no matter what the cost. The Scriptures even say: anyone who’s not willing to leave behind mother, father, brother, sister, children, whatever – if you’re not willing to leave that behind for the Lord’s call, then you’re not worthy of Him.

People really thought you were nuts, after you’d made that decision, but the call was really strong in your heart. Did you have a peace about it?

Ezekiel: I had a deep peace – in fact, God bless him, the pastor even came out within three days – begged and pleaded, argued and yelled – I mean, he really was going after this lost sheep. I had such a

deep peace, that once again, the Lord had given me a Scripture early that morning “When it is heaped upon him, he will sit in silence”. And I thought, boy, there’s a storm coming – I just knew that the pastor was coming and that I was gonna get it.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: And through that whole haranguing, I just was able to keep my peace and my quiet. That doesn’t mean when he left, I didn’t break down and cry to the Lord.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: But even with that, I still had a peace. I knew I was where I was supposed to be, doing what I was supposed to do. But it was a radical break and a move, and it probably did look freaky to people.

Clare: Yeah, absolutely!

Ezekiel: I couldn’t worry about that.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: I had to have my heart, mind and eyes on the Lord. In fact, I’m convinced the reason He brought us together is that she had her heart and mind and eyes on Him, and had for years, and so did I. And our paths just naturally kind of converged because we weren’t looking for a spouse – we were looking for Him, and He brought us together in Him.

Clare: Yeah, and that’s another point that I want to make in our quest for the mission that God has for us. Again, we don’t want to try to second guess the Lord and jump ahead of Him, looking for a spouse or whatever. The little obedience’s, the little things: where to live, what area you’re supposed to live in. What church are you supposed to go to. If the Lord asks you to move and He puts a yearning in your heart... I was in Phoenix at the time, and He put a yearning in my heart to go to Arkansas, that was near a Christian community that had been an inspiration to me. I made that change, I left behind everything in Phoenix and I moved on. There was little step – well, it was a big step – but it was a little step if you look at the whole journey, it’s really long.

Then there came a point in time, and it seems that the Lord gave you a word about bringing the factions of the church together?

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: Unity.

Ezekiel: He really - through a series of visions and dreams, and just deep inner speaking of the Lord - I really felt like He was asking to bring the broken parts of His body together. In fact, it was interesting, because looking back, we had a cross that had the image of Jesus on it - like a crucifix. And it kept falling and breaking. One time it was a hand, another time it was an arm, another time it was the legs. Once the... it was almost like the head. It was like the body, the image of Jesus on the Cross, kept falling somehow and breaking. Parts were breaking – it just wouldn’t stay together. It was weird. We thought it was demonic at first, until we started to get the message. Wow, the Body is pulling apart from itself.

Clare: Yeah, yeah. It's fractured and divided. The calling was on both of our lives. At that point, I was supporting him in his ministry and we were singing together and traveling together. Then there came a time when the Lord called you to put up the music, for a reason. You want to explain?

Ezekiel: Yeah, well, uh . . .

Clare: Oh, and this was a direction, that one of those crooked lines that seemed totally out of whack with what we thought we were supposed to be doing, right? But there came a time when the Lord really switched gears on us and He asked you to put your music away for a season.

Ezekiel: Yeah, that was a big one. And I remember – I began to just lose any inspiration for singing, writing, playing music. I just lost my heart for it. I thought, "Man, what's wrong with me? What's going on?" But at the same time, I was feeling yet again, a deeper pull to prayer, and to time. It's almost like, when He talks in the Scripture, I can't tell you exactly where it is, but through the prophet, He says "Come away – I'll draw her away to the desert and there I'll speak to her heart."

Clare: Yeah, yeah.

Ezekiel: It's the same type of thing as "Be still and know that I am God." This was more than spend an hour instead of twenty minutes with your coffee. We were traveling in an RV bus across country and had finally settled into an area here in New Mexico, and I began to see "Wow, that was a real part of my identity." And this troubadour for the Lord and all a sudden, I didn't have any identity at all except in Him. But that was OK, because I didn't want anything but Him at that point, you know.

Clare: Yeah. Well, and you know sometimes people can look at you and see you as a thing. A clever musician. An interesting couple. And they get their eyes off the Lord. And that's not what we wanted.

Ezekiel: I remember He spoke to me one night in particular before putting away the music, and He said, "*You're stealing My Bride.*" And I thought, "What? Stealing Your Bride? That's all I want is to bring Your Bride to You." And at that time we'd show up at churches and we'd always face the people and play. And from that moment, I thought "Oh, my gosh – I don't want them looking at me, or us." Oooh, that guitar, oh this, that. So, we began to turn our side to people and face the pulpit or the sanctuary, whatever. And people would be like – "What are they looking at when they're singing?" We're looking at the Lord – we're not looking at the congregation anymore. And it wasn't too, too long after that that He had me put it away altogether for a season.

Clare: Mmmhmmm

Ezekiel: A long season, actually.

Clare: Yeah, yeah. So, that was another one of those crooked lines that we were talking about. It was important in our formation to be able to serve Him, to lay that down.

Ezekiel: And to be honest, I didn't know it, but the Lord was preparing me through that to raise Clare up into a ministry in her own right, through her own gifts and talents, and at the age of what, 57?

Clare: 58, He gave me music.

Ezekiel: She picked up music – I gave her a little mandolin and an open tuning. And she'd sit there by the hour and plunk and plink. And that led to a cello, which led to a harp, which led to a beautiful keyboard. She started writing this beautiful music. Recording it and all this stuff was coming out of her.

In the meantime, I'm just like blah. No inspiration. No nothing. And I finally got it again: 'Duh! Oh, I'm supposed to support her, I guess, and be her covering and her underpinning.' And I was feeling called deeply into prayer anyway. And I was really happy at that point. I mean, I might do a few background vocals for you, or a little guitar here and there, but it was pretty rare. I just wanted to put a little trim here and there if I was needed. But most of the time, I was out of the picture. And that was OK!

Clare: Yeah, the crazy part is, our styles are different.

Ezekiel: Very different!

Clare: It would be so nice if they weren't, but they are you know.

Ezekiel: Yeah, it's all right!

Clare: And we could fill in for each other sometimes, but basically it's not really easy to do that because our styles are so different.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: There was something I was wanting to say . . . oh, well, you know, so in the beginning for the first few years, I supported you in your ministry.

Ezekiel: Right, right.

Clare: And nothing was really important to me except raising my children and supporting you in your ministry.

Ezekiel: Well, you had a Christian bookstore, remember, which we talked about, you remember. And she had to shut that thing down, pack up whatever books, and get on the road with me almost overnight. I mean, that was laying a lot on the altar. To follow this man across the country who the Lord was bringing this relationship closer and closer. We were married soon after – probably within several weeks after that.

Clare: Yeah, that's right.

Ezekiel: But she had to lay a lot down to support me, and get behind me. I never knew what it was like to have someone put a cup of coffee in front of me or have my clothes pressed and ready, and my guitar ready and everything just so - so all I had to do was just be with the Lord, be prepared and just show up and let Him do hopefully what He was going to do.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: That was a real blessing.

Clare: And it was really wonderful for me, because I could feel that I was backing him up. And some couples would look at that and say “Well, what about you?” About me was, I was finding my joy in serving him and supporting him in what he was called to do. And that’s another point of obedience. This was the obvious thing for me to do - was to be there for you. And that’s what I’d been praying for – I was praying that you could come into your ministry with your music.

Ezekiel: Plus, the bottom line was, our hearts were still for the Lord and to bring people closer to the Lord and helping Him. And I tell you, we weren’t just – lalala – playing music in church and traveling. Sometimes we were washing dishes in a homeless shelters. I think there were a couple of times we stayed overnight in some places like that. But, you know, whatever we could do to help. Whatever the Lord wanted to do in that moment.

Clare: And we also went on the odyssey of cross-pollinating churches, and being pollinated in the Orthodox church. We learned a lot about the Eastern Christian church.

Ezekiel: Eastern as in . . .

Clare: Eastern Orthodox

Ezekiel: Normally Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox. But also many, many Christians in Eastern Europe, from the Middle East. Man, I had no idea we had so many brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and cousins.

Clare: And some swingin’ black churches.

Ezekiel: Oh my gosh! (They both laugh)

Clare: That was fun!!

Ezekiel: The red velvet chairs and the organ playing and the bass, (pretends to play bass guitar).

Clare: Evangelist Ezekiel!

Ezekiel: Evangelist Ezekiel is gonna talk to us today! The church mother would be up there testifying. Oooooee, don’t be making no change in that plate!

Clare: And the beautiful part is, any legalism that was in our hearts or in our spirits, the Lord just erased it.

Ezekiel: Cut it, flushed it.

Clare: Because we could see the people loved the Lord. We could feel the presence of the Lord in all these different environments.

Ezekiel: And all the judgments went out the window with things that we thought that we knew.

Clare: No room for judgments.

Ezekiel: Things that we thought that we had heard.

Clare: Right, right.

Ezekiel: Get up and swim around in the Body a little bit. Wow, it's amazing. And while you're learning and seeing this beautiful Body, some of you might rub off on them, too. The Lord will work both ways.

Clare: Yeah. And we had a lot of judgments, and a lot of opinions and a lot of ideas. And part of our formation was following this crooked line of going into different churches and traveling and visiting people and just sharing the Lord with them. It opened our eyes; it opened our hearts.

Ezekiel: Right. Not that it was all lollipop, lalala either, because it wasn't always easy. Sometimes there were some differences. We call it the three-day-old sock syndrome. Once you show up somewhere, at first, oh, it's all wonderful! Second day, it's OK. By the third day the people start to want to know, start digging. "What do you really believe? Where are you from? What kind of background?"

So, regardless some edges start to rub, some holy abrasion. And sometimes it's wonderful and you go and you mingle and you have the right hand of fellowship. Sometimes you get the left boot of fellowship, and that can be real painful. But you learn not to quit it. And I tell you, the beauty for me, is after years of this now coming into areas where people really hang in there over the long run, and don't just walk away. We were surprised and amazed that certain churches, and certain people in churches in certain areas, actually didn't just bounce you off the wall, or accept you like you were candy in cake. But really hung in there and told you the real truth when you needed to hear it, and would stick around for the uncomfortable things.

Clare: So, you know the point I want to make here is that if we had gotten our mind on a musical, Christian musician career, we would have totally missed what the Lord wanted to do.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: And this is part of those little bitty steps of obedience and following what He wants us to do, even though it doesn't make sense. But it's in our hearts – we can feel it in our hearts and Scripture readings confirm it. And in prayer, the Lord speaks to us and tells us different things. And He doesn't tell us exactly where we're going to end up, but He does tell us what our next step is. If we're not willing to lay down our agenda of the Christian musician, traveling Christian musician, getting recordings out and things like that, if we're not willing to lay all that down, then we're going to miss the wholeness the Lord is trying to create in us to give us the depth that He wants. I mean, He spent a good 23 years preparing us for the ministry that we are just coming into now.

Ezekiel: Oh yeah, easily!

Clare: And tucking us away a lot, you know. And exposing us to different cultures.

Ezekiel: And one point that I'd like to make is, so - you're listening to this Youtube session of Heaven Talk and you're thinking "Well, how does that apply to me, I'm not a Christian musician? I'm don't travel." But, have you had some kind of a change in your life? Do some doors seem to have been closing? Or have you had a restlessness? Could the Lord be asking you to take a step in faith? Maybe it doesn't all look guaranteed and it doesn't all look easy. Maybe it looks hard! But what's worth the

peace that you're really looking for and the happiness, contentment and fulfillment that you really have always longed for. And you're probably going to have to spend some time with the Lord and tell Him "Well, Lord, show me my heart. Show me what my gifts and talents are, or what the desires of my heart really are!"

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: And He will.

Clare: And the thing is, you cannot have your eyes on your agenda. What you think you want to do with your life. This is where it gets hard because, the Christian community that you're associated with... or the people that you know are looking at you and saying "What are you doing with your life? You're just wandering here and wandering there. It doesn't make any sense. Why don't you get a job, or settle down in a church."

Ezekiel: You might not always get the pats on the back, you know.

Clare: Well, yeah. I mean there's a lot of scrutiny when you're not putting out a gross national product. The GNP of a Christian is personal holiness. It's holiness and love for the Lord. It's not albums that have been produced and are out, and books that have been written and book signings and appearances here and there. That's not what it's about. There's no sense of worldly accomplishment when you're following the Lord. Rarely is there that sense of worldly accomplishment. If you get your eyes on that, you've missed it. And you'll start tweaking your life to wrap around what's going to please other people and entertain them.

Ezekiel: Right. Your position in a church, or what you like, what you'd hoped to be. The prayer group leader. The such and such ministry. Or the deacon or this thing, or that thing. Who knows? But what does the Lord want? What's He say.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: Plus, not the voices (I can't tell you the freedom in being able to cut those leashes that pull this way and that way) the voices of the past: the mothers, the fathers, the uncles, the aunts, the cousins, the brothers, the sisters, the friends, the associates and the church.

Clare: Expectations! Everyone's got an expectation on what you should do.

Ezekiel: Some can be supportive and helpful, but . . .

Clare: That's rare! (laughs)

Ezekiel: But be careful!

Clare: But your heart is tugging you in one direction for the Lord and it doesn't make sense to people on the outside. So, if you're trying to please man and to accumulate credits and look good to the world, you're never going to find the path that the Lord has for you. You have to be willing to be hidden sometimes, be willing to be passed over.

Ezekiel: Right.

Clare: Be willing to be of no account. Be willing to be called a failure. You have to be willing to be rejected. And that's one of those things I talk about in the Bridal relationship. The Bride has always got a crown of thorns. If you look at her life, you're going to find there's a crown of thorns in her life. And she has to resemble the Groom. The Lord is looking for a mate that resembles Him.

Ezekiel: There's always a cup to drink. There's always a chalice that you're offered. You know, "Shall I not drink the cup that's offered me?"

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: So to speak. And again yeah, there're joys. There're all those things. He said, "No one who's given up all these things won't receive many houses and farms and fields and children and lands, and all these possessions. And persecution, besides. Life eternal.

Clare: Yes, yes.

Ezekiel: Persecution besides. You know, one thing I thought about when you said, "keeping our eyes on the Lord" – a little light went off. I think we need to keep our ears on the Lord, not just our eyes, but our ears. Because you've got all the voices telling you what to do and the voices in your own head – your dad or your teacher or your coaches – who knows who or what? And I think it's important to put blinders on the ear gate as much as on the eye gate. Wouldn't you say?

Clare: Oh yeah. The tyranny of memories. You know, memories of failures in the past. You can't be daunted or guided by anything other than the present moment, what the Lord is saying to you in your heart. The reason that we wanted to share this with you is that we both feel that we've come into exactly what the Lord wants us to do. And we can see all of the formation that He's taken the time to do in the past 23 years. He's taken us in so many different directions. We weren't expecting to be landing in the place that we're in. But, we're fulfilled and we're deeper than we were when we began.

Ezekiel: And that doesn't mean we've arrived!

Clare: Oh NO! (laughs) That's not happening.

Ezekiel: Who knows... within another 5 months to 5 years, if He tarries, you know! Who knows what He's going to do? But I'll tell you this much, there's a deeper peace than there's ever been before and a contentment and a real happiness and a joy, a gentle joy, a deep joy. It's almost like if you took a bucket, and you put it... maybe 2/3 or 1/2 filled... and you put it in the ocean. And you watch, kind of just go. And it'll get tossed here or there. But if you filled that thing 3/4 of the way up, more substantially, it will take those waves a lot easier, because it's deep and it's full. It's not going to get tossed about as much. But it takes time to fill up.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: It takes time. And there may need to be – there probably will need to be some healing along the way with some past work: curses, failures or supposed failures, condemnations, who knows? Guilt, toxic, who knows? And the Lord can and will heal those things along the way. You don't always have to

act and react to things and drag all that around. I'm certainly still in the process of healing and being healed from things and not reacting and that kind of thing.

Clare: Well, yeah, and I didn't want to imply that we'd arrived, because we haven't arrived. But we know that we're in that center of His will for our lives and there's great peace in that.

Ezekiel: Right. There is a peace, yes.

Clare: So no matter what storm comes, you know – I mean if we were to lose our house, we'd be equally as happy as having our house, because we'd know that the Lord had a reason for that. We've seen time and time again that nothing happens without Him directing, His approval and making good come of it. And we look forward to what else He does, because we're growing, you know?

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: We're growing.

Ezekiel: And it doesn't mean it might not come with a "gasp" at first, but you know, you kind of get used to it. And we've been through this a lot. I think our first ten or twelve years of marriage, we probably lived in 14 different places. I can't tell you the cars that have been donated and then we would give away the cars, and another one would come. You can't out-give the Lord. The more you shed yourself of the clutter and the luggage and this... whatever you have - the more comes in. If He sees that you have open hands, He'll just keep sending you what you need because He knows you're going to pass it on.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: Corrie Ten Boom used to say - the Auschwitz survivor that many of you are familiar with, the book and movie "The Hiding Place" came from her life - she'd say: "I've learned not to hold things too tightly, because it hurts when the Lord has to pry my hands open." She learned to be open-handed.

Clare: Yeah. So, we just wanted to share that with you and we're praying for you, Youtube family. A lot of you right now are asking some questions about wanting to get deeper with the Lord and the directions that He has for you. I think that the expectation of the Rapture has probably caused a lot of people to miss what God wanted them to do, because they didn't think they had the time. And I've struggled with that.

Ezekiel: Oh yeah.

Clare: But the bottom line is, if He's asking you to do something, He knows about the timing. If He's asking you to go to college or university or go to a Christian university, or if He's asking you to go on the mission field or get married and have children - He knows how all of that is going to work together and you don't have to be second guessing Him. If you're using logic and you're thinking and you're working it out on a human and worldly level, you're gonna miss Him, because He's in the heart. He's guiding you through your feelings – deep, deep, deep feelings. Not the ones on the surface but deep down inside. He's guiding you in your heart and He's drawing you into a greater depth and He's turning your head into different positions from where you may have gone or wanted to go in order to help you be well-rounded, so that you can come into the fullness that He has for you. So, it's a matter of trust.

Ezekiel: Yeah, Yeah.

Clare: Really just totally trusting Him.

Ezekiel: A lot of surrender and letting some things die away when they need to.

Clare: Not being overly concerned with what other people think. That's really huge. Yeah, that's probably the biggest obstacle that we've had. And you know, the devil jumps on that. He jumps in there with condemnation. I mean, how many times have you had to go through that scenario, where you said "I'm going to get a job." And no matter what you do...

Ezekiel: Or, I'm gonna do this, or I'm gonna do that . . .

Clare: But the job thing is huge – the devil is saying "What are you doing? You're not doing anything. You're not producing this, you're not producing that. You don't have a job."

Ezekiel: You need to be a responsible American male.

Clare: And then you try to get a job and the doors just close. It's not for you – it's not what He wants.

Ezekiel: He wants to be the hand that provides.

Clare: Yeah!

Ezekiel: If you've given up everything to serve the Lord, He really wants to be the hand that feeds you and He will literally do that. But the more you take back or try to take back, He can't get His hand in there. You're getting in His way!

Clare: You can either do it yourself in your own strength or power, or you can let Him do it, and follow what He wants you to do.

C: Where's Angel? Introduce Angel.

E: I'm been looking down. This is our little Angel – she's been our little sweetheart for the longest time. Her white footies, just the sweetest little thing. So she's our director and our technician. And just a little perk on the video this time. Say bye bye Angel.

C: Part of the family of 5 and their all different, just like our children.

E: You'll receive more cats, more dogs, more parrots, more . . . and Heaven besides.

C: OK

E: Well thanks again for joining us on this segment of Heaven Talk. The Lord be with you, and until we meet again here, there or in the air.

C: God bless you.

song All that I Can Do

January 3, 2015



Father, when you sent Your Son to live with us our lives to mend,
Placed His love upon the altar, that with Him we might ascend.

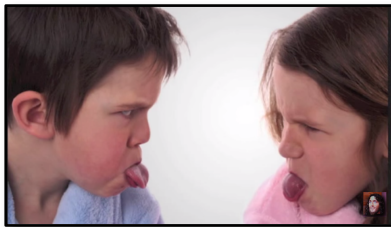
All that I can do is thank You, All that I can do is Pray
All that I can do is lift my hands to sing Your praise.

Oh, the blessed life you give me and the Holy road You choose,
Lead me all the way thru Calvary, and I'll always follow You.

All that I can do is thank You, All that I can do is Pray.
All that I can do is lift my hands to sing Your praise.

Spirit of the Lord? or Spirit of the Pharisee?

January 4, 2015



Tonight I want to share with you a burden that I have, that Ezekiel and I BOTH have for the Body. Lately I have been most concerned about the accuracy of some of the things I have posted. I do spend a great time and effort to be sure something is from the Lord, to the very best of my poor human ability to discern. But in hindsight, I like to make sure as best as I can if I still see a video as valid. If it ever comes up that I made a mistake in posting a video, I will take it down. And you'll know about it, especially if it's an

important one.

I do like to learn, and consider your insights, from those of you who take time to comment. I really am getting a lot out of your comments, and I appreciate them very much, even when they're challenging. That's not a problem, I still really enjoy them and they give me cause for thought. If I need to change something, I will.

So, I went to the Lord about the video on Miami, because some issues about immanency had come up. And He confirmed that video again, that message again. I was concerned that it was Him, and He confirmed it was Him, but this is really interesting: He gently reminded me that brotherly love and concord among His Body is a higher priority than being "spot on" with prophecy. Here I am concerned about accuracy, and here HE is concerned about love. Oh, isn't that just like Him?

And I want to quote I Corinthians 13:

If I speak with the tongues of men and angels but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have gift of prophecy, and know ALL mysteries, and ALL knowledge, and if I have ALL faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast. It isn't proud. It doesn't dishonor others, and isn't self-seeking. It is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs.

So often our egos get invested in our opinions. And under the guise of misplaced zeal for the truth, we tend to push the issue until we have established our rights, and the errors of others. How sad! We are all on the same team, guys, part of the same Body. Should we be undermining one another?

Not long ago, my husband Ezekiel had several terrible days where he felt, to some degree, the emotional pain of the Lord, from the scourging and crucifixion. Why? Because the Body of Christ is so ripe with accusation, in-fighting, critical and judgmental lashing out. And each lash (the Lord showed him), each lash is like another gouging, debilitating lash against His very Body, and His very Bride. And is it possible the head doesn't feel the pain of its member in the Body? No, it's not possible. When we wound one another, we are wounding our own body. We are insulting, judging, and demeaning Christ Himself.

That doesn't mean we can't disagree on doctrinal positions, but it does lay a heavy responsibility for charity and delicacy in disagreements. Of course, better yet, don't get caught up into controversy, if it can be avoided.

And the Scripture advises that, not to get into useless arguments. However we do have to discern, it is our duty to maintain and defend the right doctrine, but when it begins to lash out at the Body, that which will NOT remain, namely prophecy, now begins to undermine that which WILL remain, namely love.

Quoting from Corinthians again, "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease. Where there are tongues, they will be still. Where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when completeness comes, what is in part, disappears."

Again, love never fails. When we cross that line, we cut off our nose to spite our face. The Lord is in agony over these strokes against His Bride. More than anything, He is calling us to love. And be an example of love to the hole world. He even said, *"You will know them by their love."* Not astute discourses, not elaborate defenses, or clever rebuttals, but LOVE, charity, patience, kindness, longsuffering. Not taking offense, and certainly not GIVING offense.

We need one another. God NEEDS us to get along. To correct a brother or sister in charity, not scathing indictment. We need to be here for one another: supporting, encouraging, even correcting in a spirit of holy love, just as we would handle the Lord's Body, as it was taken down off the Cross.

Understand, guys, that when we are critical of others, and when we attack people, we injure them. We hurt them. We make them weaker. That's not the spirit of the Lord, that's the spirit of the Pharisee. That's legalism. I don't think any of us wants to have a religious spirit because a religious spirit is sent by the devil to cause division in the Body. And when we insist on having our own way, when we defend things or attack things, then we do damage. That's not the spirit of the Lord, that's the spirit of the Pharisee, a religious spirit. That's something we need to repent of, and ask the Lord's forgiveness. And if we have offended our brother or our sister, go to them and make amends, and tell them we're sorry.

We don't want to destroy the Body, but unify the Body. I'm not saying compromise over important issues, but I am saying, when you hit loggerheads with somebody, rather than being ugly about it, be gentle and kind and agree to disagree. I mean, most of these arguments and these petty things don't have anything to do with our salvation, but wounding another soul puts that soul in jeopardy of losing THEIR salvation. Do we want to be responsible for that? Do we want to have blood on our hands for the person that Jesus died on the Cross for?

This is a serious thing. It's not a little thing, it's a BIG thing. And it certainly is not becoming of His Bride. It really puts us in danger of not being raptured, to be honest with you. If you've got a bitter spirit, the Scriptures are very clear about bitterness and unforgiveness, about insisting on going your own way. If we've got something like that, that's pride and we're in trouble.

And I don't want to be the one standing on the ground, thinking about whether or not I will be taken, when the rapture approaches, if we even get that kind of warning. So, let's pray that our love will triumph over harshness, and that our comments and replies on Youtube will be an example to unbelievers who are observing us. And they will say, "Look, how they love one another. They're not like the other channels where there is backbiting and accusation going on. Obviously, they LOVE one another". And that's what the Lord said would be a sign to the unbelievers that we are Christians.

The Lord bless you, and help us all to be peacemakers, lovers of the truth, but lovers of souls, as well. Amen.

song Celestial Wedding Waltz – Instrumental

January 10, 2015



Innocent Blood, Wounding Christians

January 10, 2015



Good evening, YouTube family, it's a real joy to have something to share with you again. The Lord has been speaking to me about the blood that we shed when we speak against people. And it goes in line with the last message that we gave you.

The devil knows well how to make the Body of the Lord sick and injured, but we are either ignorant or indifferent to his devices. I say this, because we cooperate with the enemy of our salvation by falling into his plans and allowing him

to use us to defeat our brothers and sisters in the Lord. I will open my soul to you to share my own sin, that you might see how very injurious our pettiness is.

I met a young lady who had a very delicate and serene Christian spirit outwardly, but I suspected inwardly to be insincere. I should have been focusing on my OWN insincerities. But through my fallen and weak nature, even hidden jealousy, I opened myself to the sin of judgment. In any case, I was given an occasion to assign a fault to her when she did something out of order that caused confusion. It was confirmed to me by a minister of God that this action WAS out of order, so I became highly suspicious of her, even though I, too, am capable of similar mistakes, even as we speak. Had I struck my OWN breast and said, "Have mercy on us, Lord, for we have ALL fallen short of your glory", I would have been firmly rooted in the love and humility of Christ, and avoided the sin.

How ugly the soul becomes when it criticizes! One has only to look at the accuser of the brethren, the devil, and the demons, to see what sin does to the angelic face that God gave these creatures before they were expelled from Heaven.

Ignoring the warnings of my conscience, I gave in to an occasion of sin by speaking against this young lady to someone who was praising her. I drew attention to her faults, and warned the person to be prudent in their dealings with her. Kind of the wait-and-see treatment, which carried with it an undercurrent of negativity and disapproval.

After this conversation, I felt dirty inside. I knew the Lord was displeased with me, so I went to pray. As I settled in before Him, I saw 2 hands before me, palms up, covered with blood. It was an ugly sight! And the more I tried to dismiss and ignore it (and by the way, this is the precipice of false discerning, trying to cover personal sin), the more I tried to dismiss and ignore it, the more it manifested clearly. The Lord was not going to let me slide.

And the Lord spoke: *"These are YOUR hands, YOU have shed innocent blood."* With that, a large black wall descended from Heaven, hitting the floor with a loud ominous CLUNK!

Quoting Isaiah, the first chapter, "When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you. Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves clean, put away your misdeeds from before my eyes. Cease doing evil. Learn to do good. Make justice your aim".

My heart was cut to the quick and I felt sick inside, realizing my fault. Nonetheless, I said, "But Lord!" At those words, some awakening of my conscience occurred, and I roused up mercy in my heart, remembering all those times I, too, have stumbled in my journey toward sanctity, and I will surely do so again.

When I fall, do I want to be kicked, or lifted up? The Body of Christ are ALL of us Christians, and who has ever heard of such a thing, a person mutilating their own body because it was sick? And yet, isn't that just what we do to ourselves when we criticize another Christian? Could we not have used love, patience, and humility, striking our OWN breast, knowing that any moment the grace of God which supports our progress in holiness, could be withdrawn for a season by divine decree, and we, too, could fall?

And what of these mistaken judgments where our limited understanding assigns motives that may not even exist. How very displeased God is with a soul that harbors criticism and judgment in their hearts. In our moment of need, do we want justice... or mercy?

To continue on with what happened in my obstinate, proud, and stubborn heart, I still wanted some proof of my sin. So, I went to the Scriptures, and prayerfully opened my Bible, only to read: "You are without excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For by the standard by which you judge another, you condemn yourself since you, the judge, do the very same things. Do you suppose then, you who judge those who engage in such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you hold God's priceless kindness, forbearance, and patience in low esteem, unaware that the kindness of God will lead you to repentance? By your stubbornness, and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God." (From Romans 2.)

At the reading of these words, a sort of conviction penetrated my heart and I was speechless, without excuse before my God. All I could say was, "I'm sorry, Lord". He replied gently, *"I forgive you. But you must now go to the sister you spoke these venomous words about, and repent before her, before I can restore you"*. So, I went to the sister and told her what the Lord had said and asked for her forgiveness. Of course, she was quick to give it. When I returned to prayer, my hands appeared before me clean, and the black wall was gone.

Beloved of God, if WE have obtained mercy and pardon for our sins, we, too, must show mercy and pardon. We pray condemnation upon ourselves every day, in the Lord's prayer, when we say, "Forgive me as I forgive others".

Judgment of others is yet another graver issue, for it is written: judgment belongs to the Lord. That's HIS job. And we are usurping His authority if we judge. We don't know the state of a person's soul, or their intentions. We can't say what their motives were for doing things. How can we mere mortals call before us one of Christ's servants in order to make pronouncements and corrections on their soul - when we have proved by our own ignorance and temerity that there is still much left to be done in our own?

The effect of this tremendous evil in the Body of Christ is mutilation and disorder. If the member was sound and healthy, we just made them infirmed. If the member was sick and failing, we may have amputated it. At the very least, there is now an infectious poison running through the veins of His body, which shall HAVE to be cured by the ointments of mercy, charity, prayer, and petition, penance, and truth, on behalf of those who have been injured. It is not only the servant who bears the fever of infection, but all those he served. Or could have potentially served. And the infection spreads like fire.

How do we expect to win the war against the devils if we cannot even master our OWN tongues? For it is written, "The tongue is a small member, and yet it has great pretensions. Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze. The tongues is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire. Itself set on fire by Gehenna. Every kind of beast and bird and reptile and sea creature can be tamed, and has been tamed, by the human species. But no human being can tame the tongue: it's a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:5-6"

Let's take a practical approach to this problem. Is this not the great petition of our hearts, that we should be praying for souls to be saved? As such, we are ALL members of God's army. Like an army, there are various positions to serve the needs of battle. There are those who go into the front lines, act as spies, snipers, foot soldiers, and the like. And there are those who remain back in the camp preparing meals, nursing the wounded, trucking in fuel and supplies, and maintaining communications. The war

against the enemy is won by precision teamwork. That means each of the men must lay down his own agenda and petty concerns to serve the other men.

Self-control and discipline are constant requirements of those under command in the military. It's absolutely demanded. What could be expected from an infantry division that had a FEW men who are harboring a grudge against each other, and waiting, just waiting for an opportunity to set the other one up.

Remember the stories about sergeants that were shot from behind by their own men in Vietnam? If the enemy is lying in wait outside the camp, while the men inside the camp are fighting with one another - and the entire division is finally taken to the infirmary because of internal injuries with each other, the enemy can just "sleep in", and take them captive as well. And we as Christians are doing as much for Satan. We are the army of God, and yet we're busy fighting amongst ourselves rather than being supportive of one another.

And finally, each time we plunge that dagger into one of God's servants, we are shedding the blood of the Savior Himself. God is calling us to amend our ways. We must not presume to say to ourselves we are baptized, Spirit-filled, "I hear from the Lord, I see the Lord, I serve here and I serve there..." therefore, we are justified in all we see and do. For, all 10 of the virgins were awaiting the arrival of the Bridegroom, but only the 5 with the oil were taken.

The Lord is ever ready to forgive us and restore us if only we'll confess our sins, and not put it off. And ya know, I've found this often that, when I talk about someone and the Holy Spirit convicts me that I just talked about someone, that opens the door for something to happen - some kind of strife between my husband and I. In fact, I did a teaching on this. We finally discovered the source of the strife: it was talking back and forth about other people. And we put a stop to that years ago, as best we could, and we're still working on that. But that is definitely an open door for marital strife, big time. So, the Lord says, "Come now, let us set things right. Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow. Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. If you are willing and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land. But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 1: 18

So, may the Lord find us innocent at His return. May He give us the grace to be charitable and kind with one another, especially with people when they fall, and fall into sin. People who are sharing or teaching, if they say something you don't agree with, (as I mentioned in my last YouTube message) that charity would prevail. That our hearts would be humble, that we wouldn't go to judging them and putting them down, and spreading the word like wildfire, "This one made that mistake, and that one, and this one's a false prophet, and that one's this and this one's that". I mean, that is abhorrent to the Lord!

You know, the angels and the communion of saints, the great saints in Heaven, the cloud of witnesses, they HEAR that stuff. They are allowed to hear that and to them, it is a filthy, dirty, stinky, diseased diaper! They HATE it, they hate to hear that. But more than that, it's an injurious thing to other people. It hurts them. It debilitates them. People know when you're talking about them behind their back; they feel a sickness in their heart. They can sense it. The Holy Spirit is grieved within them. And just as we speak against people, the Holy Spirit is grieved within US. And He'll run away, rather than listen to that. He'll just leave because He doesn't want to hear it. I can't tell you how many times I've felt Him leave because I opened my mouth and made a judgment.

So, we pray, "Lord, that You'll give us the grace to have pure, loving hearts that are supportive of others, and not go on wounding the Body of Christ. In Jesus name, amen."

Spiritual Dryness 1 of 2, Heaven Talk

January 15, 2015



Ezekiel: Good evening, welcome to Heaven Talk: considerations of Heaven, and Heavenly considerations. I'm Ezekiel.

Clare: ...and I'm Clare,

Ezekiel...and we just wanted to come and visit your screen tonight. The topic of discussion is dryness.

Clare: Spiritual dryness.

Ezekiel: Ring a bell?

Clare: It must ring a bell with someone because we had a heck of a time getting in here to record it.

Ezekiel: A few bumps and bruises along the way.

Clare: More than usual.

Ezekiel: So we just wanted to talk about the times when you just really feel like you're in a desert. You can't sense, or feel, or hear the Lord. It seems like you can't touch Him. Ever have that problem?

Clare: Like right now? I am going through one of those desert times right now, so it's especially poignant to me right now.

Ezekiel: I don't want to insult your intelligence, I am sure you know what that's like. Someone once said, early in my conversion:

"When you can't sense or feel or see or hear the Lord, maybe it's because your deep, deep, deep inside of Him. When you see and hear and sense something, you are looking at it from the outside, looking toward it. When you're in the center of God, deep in His heart (and many of the early Christian writers talk about that), that's really a time of profound growth in our soul, but our feelings are cut off and it's hard. Very hard."

Clare: I was reminded of, when you were saying that, of that famous little picture with the footprints: My child, I was carrying you. Only one set of footprints. Why did you desert me, Lord? How come there's not two sets of footprints? And the Lord answered him, Because I was carrying you. And in these dry times, He really does need to carry us.

Ezekiel: It reminds me of a baby going, "Waaaaa".

Clare: That's for sure.

Ezekiel: I am sure you mothers can relate to this. If a baby isn't nursing properly, many times the mother will draw the baby AWAY from the breast, repeatedly, to the point to where he kinda gets the idea, and she still won't give him the milk until he's really screaming and going at it, until he really wants it with a real hunger and a passion.

Clare: Is that what you want, Lord, for me to scream?

Ezekiel: A good friend of mine told Him once, "Ya know, Lord, if you keep playing hard to get, you're not gonna get got". I don't know how that works...

Clare: That wouldn't work for me.

Ezekiel: We were kinda brainstorming, and looking at some examples and reasons to maybe troubleshoot some of this, and right off the bat, one of the very first things we came up with, was, remember we have a real enemy. And it's in a time of great trial that the devil tries to cloud our faith in our mind. But remember the Lord says, "I, the Lord, do not change. I am true to you. I will never leave you nor forsake you".

Clare: We know He's there by faith, and that brings up another point. A lot of times, when He's doing this, He's doing it to STRENGTHEN our faith. Sure, I would say, "What? Strengthen my faith?" Sure because we KNOW He's there, and we know that He loves us, and He's not allowing us to see Him for a season, and He wants to see, "Will they still believe? Will they still cleave to Me? Will they still continue to do all the things I've asked them to do? Will they be obedient during that time even though they aren't really seeing Me?"

Ezekiel: Ya know, another thing to remember is, this is temporary. Remember the times He's brought you through, in the past. David in the Psalms regularly complained, sometimes bitterly, about his trials and sufferings, but almost every time, he goes back. And you can see time and time again in the Psalms, but I remember Your faithfulness in the past.

Just recollecting and trying to separate yourself, for a minute, from your trial and the dryness, and think, "How did He bring me through the LAST time?" because this has probably happened before, right?

Clare: I counted up today, I have been walking with the Lord for 35 years, and I can't even begin to count the number of times He has brought me through a desert like this.

Ezekiel: James talks about in the 1st chapter, verse 2: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish it's work so that you might be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Clare: Right, right. In the early, early church, some of the traditional writers and church fathers talk about the desert of dryness, and that it's a sign of (I was laughing about this because I was sharing it with someone today.) maturity to be able to function in the fullness of being a Christian when the Lord is not revealing Himself to you, when He's not making it plain that He's there with you, and you're not feeling Him; you can't sense Him, or touch Him or see Him or hear Him. There's just a distance there, like a dark wall.

And some of those writers say that the need for all these affirmations – to be able to see the Lord, to hear the Lord - is really for IMMATURE Christians, not for the ones who have been walking with Him for a long time. I was telling my friend, "I'm going to stay a baby!" Give me my thumb, I'm going to stay a baby because I love to hear from Him, and I love to see Him. And when I don't, I just feel so lost. I can't really go to the piano and create, I can't do talks and things, I can't share teachings with you, I feel so dry because, before we do a teaching, we go into prayer, and we wait until the Lord has fully released us from prayer and we carry that grace outward into the teaching. And so it's very difficult for me to create anything without His sensible Presence. It's very hard. And thank goodness, before we started Heaven Talk tonight, He let me know just a wee bit that He was with me.

Ezekiel: I remember reading that, when the Lord gives us consolations, or dreams or visions or just a feeling of His Presence, it's kinda like going on a trip to California. You're halfway across Arizona, and the sign says, "Los Angeles, 300 miles". Well, you don't stop at the sign or you'll never get there. It's just a sign to tell you you're on the right road, you're going the right way, and keep moving forward. So, I think probably consolations and feeling the Lord's Presence and sensing that is the same thing: we appreciate it, but we can't always just stop and camp out there, can we? I mean we WANT to because it feels really good.

Clare: And I normally wait until He releases me from prayer. But the devils are opportunists, and they are always looking for ways to accuse us because they know accusation brings us down and separates us from the Lord. And so they want to cause even more of a chasm by lying to us, and saying "God's rejected you, you OURS now, and you're going to Hell." They will come in and try to fill the gap, even with a false Jesus to try and fill the gap.

And those of you who have been with us awhile know we always get a 2nd and 3rd witness, always when we go into prayer and we're given a message. There are times when I know that I know that I know it's the Lord, but other times, I'm not spot-on in picking things up, and I really need to know that it is the Lord. We use our Bible Promises or our Scriptures and we ask the Holy Spirit to pick a reading for us, and then, if we get "lying", forget it. I don't care what was said, I just drop it like a hot potato because it's not the Lord. But if we get "Holy Spirit", or "God's Love", or several different readings...

Ezekiel: Any of the Scriptures along those lines that are affirmative. And that brings to mind, we have to ask for help sometimes. And sometimes we get so cozy with OUR relationship with the Lord, MY snuggly time with the Lord, that we don't go outside of ourselves and ask for help with discernment. Part of it might be fear (what if they don't agree), but try to pray for and look for someone who is mature in the faith that you can trust, and just ask them to be a prayer partner with you. "Would you please pray about something." And maybe you have the agreement that you don't even have to tell them what it is in detail, but if you get a word from the Lord, tell them you're trying to discern something right now. It's okay, and we should go outside of ourselves. We need each other, we got to depend on somebody else sometimes, we can't do it by ourselves.

Clare: Someone like that is a precious treasure, and I thank the Lord for my husband because he's that precious treasure for me.

The first thing that happened to me in this dry cycle was I wondered, "What have I done, Lord? Have I sinned? What have I done?" And there was a situation where I didn't totally obey Him, and I knew what He wanted me to do, and I didn't totally obey Him, and that's when this all began. So, in MY particular case, my disobedience definitely had something to do with the trial.

Now one of those things He's trying to accomplish is humility, and a lack of presumption because, to say, "I know You don't want me to do this, Lord, but I'm going to do it anyway" is presumption. And I deserve to lose His company if I have that kind of an attitude about Him that is so casual.

Ezekiel: He is still God. We were talking last night about the "buddy friendo" syndrome: we're friends, we're chummy, we're mates, and it's good... and sometimes familiarity breeds a little contempt when we start to treat the Lord on a shallower basis than we should. He's NOT just a buddy-friendo, He's not just your chum, He's still God, He's still the Lord and that respect has got to be there.

Clare: It's such an incredible blessing to be able to hear Him, He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. I'll reveal Myself to them." In John, He said this. That has been the Scripture of my life that I love, is being pure of heart and working towards that end. And any kind of vanity or pride or presumption definitely crosses that. I understand that the Lord is correcting me right now. He loves me, and I want to grow in honoring Him in obedience, so I appreciate this correction, even though it's terribly painful. And that's not all of it. The other part is humility, like when you are accustomed to hearing from the Lord, and seeing the Lord, the devil can come in with prideful thoughts. And the bottom line is we are nothing special, we are just committed to serving Him. And the fact that sometimes we see Him or hear from Him is not because we're special, it's because He wants to give us spiritual food that we can share with you. He does that for you, He doesn't do that for us so that we can walk around, saunter around and be arrogant, that has nothing to do with it. It's totally feeding us and filling us to feed you and fill you.

Ezekiel: I'm going to address feelings and emotions. James Dobson wrote a book a few years back, "Emotions: Can we Trust them?" and no, we can't. Can we?

Clare: No, not always. I mean there are sanctified emotions and there are fleshly emotions. There is a sanctified word, and there is a fleshly word. Maybe you will pull up a Scripture to defend something you want to do, and it's not the Lord's will. Or a sanctified dream, I call that a dream with the signature of the Holy Spirit, or a PIZZA dream, or a net-surfing dream. It's like, all of these things accumulate in your mind. So I think with emotions, it's the same thing. The Lord had emotions, so they do serve a purpose. But you have to discern.

Ezekiel: In this day and age, most of us are at least a little bi-polar or manic or whatever so (laughs)... It's definitely not the feeling and we all want to go for that feeling because that's the.. yum-yum, mmm...that's what I want, to feel good. And He certainly cuts those feelings off sometimes.

For me, many times, it's all about relationship with Him, right? And, "do you love Me because I have goodies in My pocket? Do you love Me just because I make you feel warm and cozy? Or will you show up and spend time with Me just for Me, whether you feel anything or not?" Some of the most peaceful times I have had in prayer have been when I haven't heard or seen or felt anything, and didn't feel like I needed to say or DO anything, but there was something about just BEING with Him. Like I have said before, a new husband doesn't want his bride busy about this and busy about that, he just LOVES her and wants her to just maybe sit on the couch with him. They don't have to say or do anything, it's just good to BE together.

Clare: Well, another thing that can come up, if we know that the Lord has drawn the curtain across so we can't see Him, and we know it's because of something we said or we did, we just need to trust that He loves us, and that He's pruning away the dead wood. But there are situations where we've been hurt,

or we've had a false word, and it's been devastating, and we shy away from the Lord from that time on because we are afraid of being devastated again. And a lot of that has to do... It's hard work to evaluate a message, and to know that it's the Lord speaking to you. This is really hard work. There's a lot of ridicule in the Christian community about people who say they hear from the Lord. "Oh, they hear from the Lord, alright." (spoken with derision) It's a very personal thing, but when you're in ministry... There are several ministers who talk about how they heard from the Lord and because their ministries have flourished, people tend to believe them because they're good teachers.

The point I'm trying to make is, when that happens, it's like being in a wreck. Like being on the freeway, and getting smashed under a semi. It's nasty. It takes time to recover from that, and to begin to trust again that the Lord will not allow deception. And every single time He has allowed it with me, I could spot pride within myself starting to kind of peak up, little ideas of pride here and there. When He's allowed that false message, He's done it to humble us, and bring us back down to who we really are before God and who God is. It's a privilege to receive something from Him, but if you being to think you're something special, He loves you enough to correct you.

Ezekiel: I have a question for all of us: Are you afraid (am I afraid) to be mad at God, to be upset with the Lord? I mean in ANY relationship, you might as well be honest.

Clare: You can't hide it from Him, that's for sure!

Ezekiel: If you feel like He's let you down, or let you get hornswoggled, or hijacked somewhere, Lord, You could have protected me. Why did You let the enemy come in? But we're not robots, He's not going to put us on the Duracell battery and let us run around like the energizer bunny, it's a learning process. Grow and stretch.

Clare: I've heard it said that ALL anger in our lives is ultimately anger against God. When you follow the twists and turn backwards, He is the One who ALLOWS things in our life,

Ezekiel: ...or could have prevented them.

Clare: ...or could have prevented them So all anger really can be traced back to God, so there's no point in hiding the fact that you're angry, you might as well be honest with Him because that's where relationship is: in that gut level honesty. And He knows already what you're upset about. I think He's just waiting for US to figure it out.

Ezekiel: So, there's a period of pouting, maybe kicking and screaming, or wanting our way. The idea of being upset with the Lord or hurt is real, that's an honest reaction. Look at Job: I feel like there came a point in that situation where Job was hurt, ya know? And the Lord, maybe, was kinda hurt some. It was uncomfortable, it was hurtful, a hard thing. And of course the devil was playing it, and jumping up and down with it.

But there was a point where God and Job had to reconcile. And we need to be able to reconcile with the Lord and just get to a point where we finally have to say, "Lord, I just don't know. Yeah, this hurts, in fact sometimes it just stinks. It's hard, and I don't understand it. But maybe I don't need to". Giving up the need to know, and just being okay with the fact that He is God, and we're not. And there are a lot of things that are way far beyond us. We not only don't need to fix everything, but we can't fix everything.

So might as well just go easy with it. Somewhere down the line, maybe we will know, maybe we won't. But we gotta keep going, we can't stay in that place of being hurt and angry or upset with Him. Right?

Clare: After years and years of walking with Him, and going through these things, you always know it's for your own good that He's doing it. Whatever He allowed, He's going to bring good out of it, and it's going to be a blessing for everyone concerned, not just us. Like, if you've lost a child or someone close to you, He's going to bring good out of that. And just trusting that He loves us, and He knows what's best for all involved, is huge. But after walking with Him for awhile, you begin to understand that He brings good out of these things, and there's a rhyme and a reason, you might not know it until we're in Heaven with Him, but we can trust that He LOVES us and will bring good out of everything He allows.

Ezekiel: Another issue is unbelief. How many times have we struggled with something that may well be the Holy Spirit, but, we hear it, we read it, we might even write it down... but it doesn't really get into here (heart).

Clare: We don't make it our own.

Ezekiel: Right, right. When was the last time that you honestly asked the Lord (or myself, as well) "Will you give me faith? Or MORE faith?" We can't have what we don't have. And we can't have anything that He doesn't give to us in the first place. So, we have to go to Him and ASK for that faith.

Clare: And of course, read the Scriptures, or listen to teachings or the Scriptures. Faith comes through hearing, so it's important that the Scriptures are fed into us.

Ezekiel: Self-credit...

Clare: ...taking the credit for God's movement in your life.

Ezekiel: Unfortunately, we don't want to think of ourselves like that, or admit it, but sometimes we feel pretty good about ourselves. "I hear from the Lord, I'm doing good, I am helping His people, I am an Okay Guy."

Clare: (laughing) Puke...!

Ezekiel: Is the Lord getting the credit and glory, or are we skimming off some for ourselves? These are just honest questions, we are trying to get to the bottom of why He is allowing dryness. And many times, it's a lesson in different areas.

Clare: Humility is huge. There are so many different ways that He humbles us, and when He notices pride, there are so many ways that we can get proud and we don't even see it in ourselves. It's scary, really, because we don't always see it or feel it, but sometimes we know, "Uh-oh, that felt weird. That's bad, that must be pride". But other times, we don't even see it at all. We are totally blind to it. And He has to stop us to wake us up to see it, and be able to recognize it.

Ezekiel: Another consideration is how small is your world. I mean, are you centered on you? Does everything revolve around me? Like the song, "It's all about you, it's not about me". I have a friend that used to sing, "It's all about me, it's not about you". The thing is, is our world revolving around me, me, me? Once again, we have to go to the Lord and ask Him, "Lord, I know I need to love You more. I

need to love souls". Are we going out of ourselves to include other people in our life? Many of you have prayer burdens, obviously, we have prayed for one another, but when it comes down to it, how small is our world?

And is He holding off the goodies so we'll come out of ourselves? I know the best thing in the world for me sometimes, when I am struggling and having trials, is to go do something for someone else, like a visit to a nursing home or whatever. Like I have mentioned before, we run a little food bank here, a little mission, which forces us to get out of ourselves. Plus, we keep an elderly lady in the front house - we just try to help where we can. And it's not easy, and we want to quit sometimes, but I think those are the things that pull us out and keep us from being me-centered.

Clare: And the other side of that is the enemy knows if we are ME-centered then we aren't JESUS-centered. And so again, he tries to cause schism or division between you and the Lord, and he revels in the idea of you thinking you're all alone, and self-pity, that's huge. When self-pity enters, "Oh, poor me", that's poison. That's real poison that turns you inward onto yourself. And you lose sight of Jesus when you turn inward. So when you start to feel that way, you'd better believe there a demon in there and it's a lie, a lying spirit of condemnation and false guilt.

Ezekiel: I am just thinking while you were talking. Okay...so many of us have been hurt in the church, by the church by other Christians. Maybe we've covered up, maybe we have hurt other people, we don't always recognize that. But have we gotten to the point where we have closed off from life, from the church, from other Christians because we don't want to be hurt? One of the reasons why our world might be so small.

And another consideration to bring up, and we're going to bring up quite a few. We talked about this last night, the Holy Spirit brought up quite a few – many and varied reasons for dryness. And, another reason could be – honestly again, have you said, "no" to God lately? Is there something He has asked of you, that maybe you said, "no" to Him about? That would certainly cause Him to pull away a bit. That hurts Him, it hurts His heart. I know what it's like. I mean, we lived on top of a high mountain wilderness for 5 years, no water, no this, no that, and I remember standing in the middle of a field one day looking up to Heaven saying, "Do you HATE me?". It was so hard for me!

Ezekiel: She loved it. Shangri-la for her – I'm the beach, surfer, water guy. But I remember struggling with Lord, "I wanna run out of here so bad, I could scream." And trying to obey Him, and stay in that place for 5 years – man that was tough! And I remember a couple of times taking "extended ministry trips" away from the mountain, and having this feeling like, "Man, you're running from what you really need to be doing."

So, hoop-de-doo, the MINISTRY went real well, right? Uh....so-so, fifty-fifty...

You can't run from the Lord. But we can always ask Him to make us stronger. That really helps, a huge help. If He is asking you for something, and you just can't gut it out, ask Him for the grace, for the help, and the strength, to turn this bitterness into sweetness. And it's okay - if He's asking you to give up something or let go of something for a time and a season, He's just making room for more. He's just cleaning up and cleaning out what really shouldn't be there for beautiful things He wants to put there.

Clare: It's interesting because my desire always, as a photographer and ice-skating, was to convey the love of the Lord to people. And I was a professional photographer for 25 years, before I got to know the Lord. And when I did get to know Him, I always wanted to use my photographs to illustrate the Psalms,

or something like that, and really touch people. Well, there was a point in which He asked me to put away the cameras, and instead of the gift with graphics, He brought up music as a gift. He gave that to me when I was 58 years old.

There was a gap, not a real long one, but the point was He wanted me to put that photography away. And I understand that I had a lot of baggage with that photography, because when you're working like that, and you're professional, you move things around, you get things to go your way, and there's a pride that definitely can settle in, especially if you have a hefty day-rate, you can really get a big head.

And all of that was baggage the Lord needed to flush out of my system. I wish He would someday allow me to shoot again, because I love graphics, I love nature, and I love to portray the beauty that He has created, but He has called me to music, instead. And writing, but the music is huge, and that's a creative thing. And that's a medium that I think conveys MORE of the love of the Lord, and does more for a soul than a photograph. Music is an incredible medium that transports a soul right out of the situation you are in. So, He knew what He was doing when He asked me to hang up my cameras. And not only because of the pride, but also because He had a better gift for me.

Ezekiel: I remember how hard that was – I remember the tears and all that...the temptations..

Clare: It's still hard. You see a beautiful sunset, and you can't just enjoy the sunset, you want to shoot it. You want to keep it forever.

Ezekiel: I was actually thanking the Lord. (chuckles) The last time I went on assignment with her, I think the jeep was up on 2 wheels on the left side. This all brings up Psalm 94:12-13: "Blessed is the man whom you discipline, Oh, Lord, and whom You teach out of your love to give him rest from days of trouble".

He's just forming us, as a parent does a child. I think of pilots, that are constantly making corrections. They're not saying, "Bad plane, you did wrong", they are just making corrections so the plane will fly smooth. And the Lord is doing the same GPS with us.

Clare: For you pet lovers, you know how your cat can do something really obnoxious, like rip up the couch, or climb the curtains, or go to the bathroom in the wrong place, or jump up on something they're not supposed to be up on (although we don't have rules like that in this house – they can go anywhere they want)? You still love your cat, or dog, or whatever. You still adore them, and you still love them and want to love on them, and hold them and pet them. And you wouldn't dream of getting rid of them over these things that are just little things. Your affection you have for them is so tremendous, and unless the cat is really wicked, and you have delivered it from every demon you can think of, then I could understand finding a new home for it.

But the point I'm trying to make is if you can look at your relationship with the Lord that way, a cat's mentality and OUR mentality are light years apart. Just as our mentality is light years apart from the Lord's mentality. He still loves us, and we are just little creatures to Him. And He still loves us, but even when we do wrong, He is going to still love us, and continue to want to be with us and to draw us close to Him. He's not ever going to desert us, or push us away. Never. Now the devil would like you to think you're being pushed away, but you're not. If He has the intention, like in dryness, to hold you back a little bit, it's only for your good that He's doing that. Just remember how much you love your animals, and when they mess up, you still love them. They're adorable.

Ezekiel: You do. You know you do. You husbands know what it's like, to share the bed...

Clare: ...with a cat. It's cold, throw another cat on the bed. (laughs)

end of video part one

Spiritual Dryness, 2 of 2, Heaven Talk

January 15, 2015



Ezekiel: You know, there comes a time when I think the Lord has to show me (and has) who I am without Him.

Clare: Ohhh...that's hard, and that's true. I am going through that right now.

Ezekiel: I mean it's wonderful when His hand is on you, and He's doing this and you're doing that - but all of a sudden, I always think - 'Boy, if He ever took His hand off of us for a moment, we'd probably just about cease to exist.' But, still, if He took a certain anointing, or a touch, or a grace, if He drew it back for a bit, maybe He's reminding us who we really are, and how much we need Him. And I have become very sensitive to my need (after almost 30 years, now, with the Lord) being able to come to the Lord again, and really come to the Father and saying, "Daddy, I NEED Jesus, I've got to have Him. Father I need You, I've got to have You". And maybe I didn't recognize that need in some of the years previous, but in my 30th-something year with the Lord, I am beginning to sense and feel the importance of that again. Did you ever feel like that? Did you ever wonder?

Clare: Yeah. And I think I have shared this a few times, but if you see yourself as a little child trying to get across the Santa Monica freeway at rush hour, trying to get across 8 lanes of rush hour traffic. And you're too little, you can't do it, you're only 6 years old. You are standing there, and if you look up to Heaven and say, "Lord, I can't do this. I'm too little". The world abhors that concept of being too little. They are constantly encouraging you to be big and strong and powerful and independent. And the Lord is totally captured by littleness. He is totally drawn to a soul who is very needy, and KNOWS they are needy, and is relying totally on Him. And there's no shame in that, it actually draws Him in faster to admit that we are too little.

Ezekiel: I remember a man in the park one day and his little girl couldn't have been more than 5 years old. And time after time after time, he would take her to the slide, he'd climb the slide with her, and he would slide down with her. He was trying to get her to where she would go up by herself, and she finally got brave enough to get halfway up, and God bless her, she just looked at him in her little play dress, and said, "Daddy, I can't do it by myself, I need you to do it WITH me".

I don't think the Lord ever gets tired of us asking...you know, like "Gee, Lord - I'm bugging You again..." He's like that good father - and this guy melted by the way: he was on the slide in a heartbeat. He just gave up trying to get her to go up by herself. He had a great day, sliding down together. And that's what I need, my Daddy to do things with me. In fact, I don't go out and do things during the day anymore, I just don't. He's given me the special grace right now to feel like He's the one that's doing something, and

He's inviting me, as His child, to come along with Him. "What are You doing today, Lord? What's on Your heart and mind?"

And that's how we make our plans, isn't it? First thing in the morning, we just ask Him what's on His heart and mind. What does HE want to accomplish? And what's His order for the day. We don't get a super readout for the day, spit out of your computer, and this is the schedule. But there's something about the day and the state of mind you're in when you give it to Him and you know we aren't running this thing, HE is. And we are coming along with Him. And if He's asking me to do anything - every day, I can't tell you the times - this has been a pretty hard winter for us, we are getting a little older and really hard to get out and get wood and do this and do that. And every day, I have to say, "Daddy, I need You to help me. Jesus, Lord, PLEASE, I can't do this. Will you help me cut this wood today? Will you help me find the wood and drag it in here? Will you help me not to be all beat-up afterwards, and banged up?"

Clare: I remember that log you wanted to split, and you couldn't split it. And you asked the Lord to help you, and you hit it, and it split in 4 pieces. That's amazing!

Ezekiel: I had this 16 pound splitter maul. Every time I hit this piece of wood, I didn't know it was all squiggly inside, and cross-grained, and I hit it with everything I had, 6, 7, 8 times and Ding! Light bulb! "Lord, would YOU split this piece?" And I gave it what little bit I had left, and it explodes in 4 different pieces. So it was like, "Couldn't you have asked Me the FIRST time, and saved yourself all that?"

You can't ask enough. In fact, I was in a prayer group one night, and I remember someone asked for something, and she was a little embarrassed and kind of shy, and she said, "Lord, I hate to bother You with something so small, but...", I forgot what she asked, but someone on the other side of the room just kinda spoke a little prophecy of edification. The Lord spoke through this person saying, "Nothing is too great or too little. I delight that you asked".

Pruning. If you've been fruitful...

Clare: ...the dryness could be a pruning.

Ezekiel: That's right. John talks about how He cuts off every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, but every branch that DOES bear fruit, He prunes so that it will become even more fruitful. Right?

Clare: I wanted to share something about the perks. When you go into prayer, and the Lord IS present, and you can really FEEL His presence, you get used to that, and you really are drawn to that, and you feed off of that. But there are times, as Ezekiel said, there are times the Lord wants you to come to Him and be with Him. And are you willing to go into prayer WITHOUT the perks, and come out and feel dry. Which is what we are talking about.

I am reminded of something that happened to Graham Cook. The Lord spoke to him the day before and said He was going to speak to him today, so he went into his study and waited on the Lord: 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9, 10 o'clock, all afternoon, all day long, but nothing from the Lord. At the last hour, 10 o'clock that night, and the Lord showed up. He stuck it out that long. And what an apostle he is! He has a gift of prophecy that is just incredible. And a real profound love for the Lord. That's what it takes sometimes.

Ezekiel: Another honest question: Am I bumping the line, or testing the Lord? Are we playing with temptation a little bit? Are we messing with something that maybe we shouldn't be, in an area where we shouldn't be? Are we trying the Lord's patience in an area, and maybe grieving the Holy Spirit, too? I know what it's like to bump the line.

Clare: Yeah, me, too.

Ezekiel: How many times have we gone to the Scriptures and it's like: "I hope I get permission, confirmation or permission", or "I hope He tells me 'no' because I really don't want to do that." But again, just being honest, is there any area of your life where you've been bumping the line, or testing the line? He'll be silent sometimes. The apostles said very plainly: Don't walk away from temptation - run.

Another thing to look at is, are we making decisions on our own? Maybe even because we don't want to know what the Lord's will is for us, because we want something really badly. I have been so guilty of that, wanting something MORE than the Lord. People talk about statues being idols, but I don't think there's anything that could be more idolatrous than disobeying the Lord to buy an expensive car, or clothing, or jewelry.

Ezekiel: Sneaking out and not asking permission...

Clare: Right - Doing things that have nothing to do with your holiness, or feeding the flock, or anything else, they are just indulgences, so to speak, and you know it. You make that decision on your own – you don't ask Him - because you don't want to hear, "No". So, until you get ahold of yourself and say, "I miss You, Lord, I really miss You and I have been avoiding You because I didn't want to hear no". When you get to that point, and you are ready to lay down your idol, then He'll come around. But that could be another reason for dryness. It's happened with me, for sure.

Ezekiel: Yeah, we can slip around sometimes – it's like He's God, but He's not going to see us...

Remember the train crossing, growing up? We might still see it, we don't pay attention that much anymore, but the train crossing always had the X: Stop, Look, and Listen. 3 golden words.

Clare: Stop, wait, and pray. Submitting yourself to the Lord because, let's face it, if you go out and do something you know you're not supposed to do, you're going to feel terrible later. And you don't want to go through all of that. It's so much easier to say, "no", right there on the spot, than it is to say, "Well, He'll forgive me", or "just this time", or, "I really want that", or whatever. And then have to go through all that repenting, and you've wasted time, and maybe wasted money, or maybe you've hurt someone.

Ezekiel: Or just being in a hurry.

Clare: If you're in a hurry, and don't stop and check, then you can still have your "yes", but if you stop and check, you might get a "no".

Ezekiel: Remember Joshua, when they crossed over, this one particular time they got an invitation to come to a great feast. And so they just went on, and didn't think to consult the Lord. And man, did they pay for it! It was rough, really rough.

Clare: That was rough...really rough!

Ezekiel: Beat 'em up pretty bad! If you love Him, TALK to Him. We have to remind ourselves, don't get in a hurry. Am I being compulsive?

Clare: I want to say something on that. The devil is ALWAYS in a hurry, always in a hurry. He wants you to do things quickly so God can't get your attention. So, when there's a push for hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry, there's a demon behind it. 'Cause the Lord is NOT in a hurry. The Lord is very deliberate and very careful. There might be times when He says, "Stop what you're doing now, go and call someone on the phone, they need to hear your voice". There's times when He will do that. But He doesn't push you to act quickly, or to change directions.

Ezekiel: There's not an anxiety about it, not a quick left turn with whiplash. The Lord just doesn't work that way.

Clare: That's a good way of putting that!

Ezekiel: Speaking of being in a hurry or going quickly, once again, in this day and age and generation of manic depressive, bi-polar tendencies, 30-second commercials, or whatever... have I been compulsive? Or impulsive?

Clare: It's on sale! I have been waiting for it to go on sale for all these months and it's finally on sale!

Ezekiel: I'll tell you one way the Lord has helped us get around that is have a "check and balance" system. There are so many couples that I run into that, after 30-something years of marriage, are still uncomfortable with praying together, talking to each other, discerning things, but man! You've got such a safety in your covering, ladies, if you will check with your husbands And guys, don't be so big for your britches that you're just going to take off with the checkbook... Some of you are saying, "Yeah, I get punished if I do that!" - but it's not a matter of punishment or reward, just check it out with your spouse if you are married. You've got a built-in discerning partner, somebody's got the periscope, someone to look out up front.

And your spouse may very well be the one to say, "Look out, there's an iceberg". She'll call me from the store or someplace sometimes and say, "Will you get in touch with the Lord? I saw something..." I know you want to buy something, or we need it, right? So, I'll check with the Lord and tell her over the phone, yes or no, whatever I feel like the Lord has given me.

But there are times when the Holy Spirit will start to gnaw on one or the other of us to touch in - with you or I out there, because we are getting into some sketchy areas and we'll call each other and say, "No, the Lord has given me some concerning Scriptures here. What's going on? Are you getting sidetracked?" Not accusing each other, just - I'm looking out for you."

Clare: That happens with me with the internet a lot. I am a real butterfly. If I see something interesting, I'm going to click on it and listen to it, especially if it's only 5 or 10 minutes long. When you do that, you know how all the windows come up on the side? There are other things on that thread, and you can spend 2 or 3 hours on the internet wasting time. And when he walks into the room, if I've been drifting, I immediately feel that in my conscience. And he's sweet enough to say, "Honey, are you getting off track?"

Ezekiel: And the same with Clare. She'll sometimes peek around the corner and say, "Sweetheart, do you really need to be doing that right now? Does the Lord want you to be working on your music? Or your writing?" You've got to be careful, don't be chiding. The last thing you want is someone picking at you, and nagging you, or bugging you. My point really, at the beginning is, check it out with each other. And if you don't have that kind of relationship, you can ask. Pray for that, and allow the Lord to cultivate that dependency on one another. If you humble yourself and go to your spouse with something, I guarantee the Lord will honor that.

And the spouse, whoever you are, you need not to be a horse's patoot, and don't USE that. Be loving. If someone's coming to you for discernment, be super-humble, and go to the Lord in a humble way. Plus, don't try to get quick, instant answers. Sometimes I just have to tell my wife, "Sweetheart – it just deserves more prayer." Or we'll put that on the back burner of the discernment shelf. It takes a little discipline, and after you're hit the bricks a few times, you learn.

Clare: It's worth the discipline to save the problems later that come from doing things that are not right.

Ezekiel: We talk about being compulsive or impulsive... Another time to be sincere and transparent before the Lord is: Am I HOOKED on something? Wow, Lord - I am feeling conviction. Where my heart is, there my treasure is. Am I hooked on this program? Or this soap opera? Or this such-and-such? This book series? Is something taking more of my time and attention than YOU are, Lord? Than my duties are? Than my spouse? My children?

Clare: Remember, all of this can affect that dryness that we're talking about, all of it.

Ezekiel: That's right. Why would the Lord pull back? To get our attention in some area. I gotta say - have I been hard on someone lately?

Clare: Oh, that's not good.

Ezekiel: Having a hard time with the Lord lately, losing touch with Him? Did we lean on someone hard? Children, family, grocery store clerk, whoever. Were we hard or harsh with somebody? We can't beat our fellow servants, we've been given and forgiven so much. He'll come down on that hard.

Clare: That's huge, that is so huge. Charity is so, so important. Charity and humility are two things that... the Lord, if you're serious about Him and are really committed to Him, He's not going to let you slide in those areas. Because those are the things that He honors the most, that He values the most in a soul, is their humility and their charity. And if we don't reflect that humility and charity of Jesus, He will definitely withdraw from us to get our attention. There's nothing really worse that I have found, personally, in my walk with the Lord that has grieved Him more than being hard and harsh with some judgment, because we hurt people, whether it's spoken or not spoken. An unspoken word still has the ability to cut a soul. You can feel when people are gossiping about you, saying things about you, and it hurts. It's destructive, and He hates to see someone suffer.

Ezekiel: Or you can feel when you have said or done something, you can feel that conviction. Do we heed that conviction, or do we just go on? Or, are we listening to conversations where we should just say, "Stop, this is wrong. We shouldn't be talking like this". And if it continues, remove yourself from that company. That will cause Him to pull back, it sure will.

Clare: Another thing is unforgiveness. And having a root of bitterness. Are we holding a grudge against someone? The Lord has said if you hold grudges against someone, that He's not going to forgive YOUR sins, either. So, He could be looking at you and saying, "And what did YOU do? I see what that other person did, but what did YOU do?" And "We need to straighten THIS one out." But if your forgive another person, then He doesn't have to be so direct with you and get your attention, because He knows you're humble, and you recognized your sin and you're repenting for it. You're repentant.

Ezekiel: I can't tell you the number of times I have seen these imaginary mirrors just fold right out in front of me. But another gut-level thing here is, sometimes you've been hurt so badly. Our youngest daughter met a guy who was questionable, and took off with her the day she turned 18. And she was pretty rebellious at that time, and decided to shoot off, and one thing led to another, and the guy gets arrested on the other end. And the daughter has to clean up and make up and all of that, but the bottom line is, I couldn't stand to hear that man's name! I would try to bring him up in prayer, and try to pray for him... but oh, the fury would just rise up in me, and it was such an acute injury of betrayal, violation of my child. And a good pastor told me, maybe you don't need to be bringing him up so much until you're healed in there. And he talked to me about making an act of the will, like in the old days if you were running from the law or whatever and you got to the horns of the altar, if you could get there, you were safe.

And there are times I feel like I just have to grab onto the hem of His garment, there have been times like that, and say, "Lord, I can't forgive. I mean I want to, I know I need to, but..." And this pastor taught me how basically say, "Lord, will YOU forgive my enemy THROUGH me?" That's another thing we need sometimes, to let the Lord work that forgiveness in us and through us because it's just too acute. But it can be done. And you may have to do it a few times. You may not feel it or sense it, but you've made it an act of your will, a decision to forgive. And it will catch up with you, eventually. It'll heal over.

Clare: Have you been convicted of something, inwardly, and been making excuses on justifying yourself? That may be something.

Ezekiel: Or someone close to you trying to get your attention about something, and you reject it; don't want to hear it. And many times the Lord will pull back to bring that up.

I want to say something at this point: man, this looks like a 21-point check on your car when you go somewhere, but be patient. This is a two-part series for the reason it's just like taking your car in, doing a diagnostic, or going in for tests at the hospital. We are trying to find out what is causing the infection. What is it that's causing this dryness? So we are going down a checklist.

Clare: Right. Is it something I am responsible for? Or is it the Lord just stretching my faith?

Ezekiel: It's not like, gosh, they're in there telling us all the stuff that's wrong with us, or they're bad...No.

Clare: I'm telling you all the things that are wrong with ME...!(laughs)

Ezekiel: (smiling) We are trying to share our own checklist with you.

There was an old custom in the early church, a beautiful custom, I forget about it sometimes. But even growing up, I remember, at the end of the day, some of the grandparents or uncles or aunts, whatever - would talk about examining your conscience. Did you examine your conscience today? And I remember

that as a kid, growing up in an Irish Catholic neighborhood: it was always the blessing before you left, or when you came in. Did you check your stuff? Did you look at your conscience? Of course, we were getting ready for confession on a Saturday, so we wanted to get it right.

But regardless, it is important to confess our sins one to another, but sometimes we need to take a regular look in the mirror. This is a checklist, we are helping to diagnose by the Holy Spirit, we didn't dream this up. He's the One who gave us these things last night, point for point. So, thank you for being patient. These are the same things that we have to look at sometimes. If you want the help, you are willing to do the work.

Clare: Absolutely. Absolutely. There's just nothing worse than feeling cut off from the Lord or feeling He's had to remove Himself for some reason. We want to get to the bottom of it.

Ezekiel: There is so much hope in all of this because, once you do find the problem, and take care of it, all of a sudden that refreshing fellowship comes back. You can feel Him, sense Him, hear Him. Unfortunately, maybe there was a plank in my eye while I was pointing out the splinter in somebody else's. So He'll show you whatever it is that caused Him to draw away, but He'll come back. Remember: this is temporary. It's not forever. It's temporary, I promise.

Clare: This dry spell that I'm going through right now, He was quick to let me know that I had sinned. He didn't leave me in mystery about that, at all.

Ezekiel: Another point I would address may be: Have I disdained or had contempt for God's gifts in my life? Or the Holy Spirit's gifts in my life? Particularly the spiritual gifts. Paul told Timothy: stir in the flame, the gift you received at the laying on of hands. Have we received spiritual gifts that maybe we're a little ashamed of, or hesitant to use because someone's not comfortable with this or that? Or have we just let it fall into disuse? Stir those gifts you've received up. Use your talents, don't bury them.

Clare: And if someone has a gift, and they are being ridiculed for it, don't join in the ridicule because that's a real offense to the Holy Spirit. And that can result in dryness, as well, that you didn't respect God's gift in someone else.

Ezekiel: We need to be encouragers, and draw those gifts out, and build them up.

Clare: Another thing I've been convicted about is I might be working on a song, or a teaching. And those things are important, and require concentration. Someone may come to the door and need food or need help, and I don't always want to go to the door and help them. Sometimes I might be tempted to turn down an invitation to charity. And responding to that invitation to charity has so much more value than anything I could ever do on the piano or in a teaching. That is living faith, that's Jesus present to those people right there. And He will keep me at arms length if I have offended Him in that way. There are just things you can't do, if you're close to the Lord, there's just things you can not do, because you have to honor His Presence in your life.

Ezekiel: I've heard it said we can't stop for everybody, can't help everyone, but Jesus shows up in the distressing disguise of the poor. Whether it's.. need gas, need food, whatever - or the neighbor....who knows what.

Clare: I think one way to sum all this up would be | Peter 4:8: Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins. And I have seen again and again, with the Lord, where a situation will come up, and something needs to be corrected, and the Lord will bring up how much LOVE that person has for other people. And it's obvious that He is so smitten by that person's love for other people, that the minor faults that they might have are DIM in comparison to the goodness and love in their hearts for other people, that charity. And that's what Peter said, "love covers a multitude of sins."

So, all these things we have talked about, all these sins we have talked about, love covers them sometimes. The Lord will still bring them up, but it's not going to be as harsh and severe if you're a loving soul. If you're a mean person, it's going to be harder on you. But if you're a gentle, loving soul, He's going to be more merciful with you. We know how He was with the scribes and Pharisees, it wasn't the prostitutes that got into trouble, it was the religious people who got into trouble.

Ezekiel: Thank you again for joining us on Heaven Talk. Considerations on Heaven, and heavenly considerations. On Earth as it is in Heaven, right?

I want to take a minute to thank those of you who have contributed to help us in the little mission that we run here, the little food bank, and whatever we can do to serve through tapes and videos or books or whatever. God bless you, thank you so much. It really helps keep the wheels turning here.

So, the Lord bless you and keep you, and may He give you the deepest desires of your heart, and contentment, fulfillment, and happiness. Amen. The Lord bless you. Until next time.

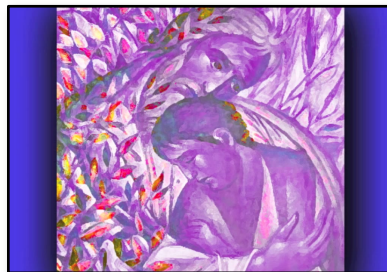
song After Time instrumental

January 16, 2015



song The Our Father

January 17, 2015



Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive our debts.
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not unto temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

song I Just Want to Praise you

January 19, 2015



I just want to praise You, lift my arms and say I love You,
You are everything to Me, I will bless Your holy Name on high.

I just want to thank You, lift my arms and say I love You.
You are everything to Me, I will bless Your holy Name on high.

I just want to love you, lift my arms and say I love You.
You are everything to Me, I will bless Your holy Name on high.

When God is Silent and It's Not Your Fault

January 27, 2015

Well, it's good to be back here with you, Youtube family. Please forgive our distance between teachings and postings, we've been rearranging our studio, and working on new songs that we'll soon be able to share with you. And sometimes the Lord just switches gears, and has us doing different things. We don't



like to be absent from posting things, but unless the Lord specifically gives us something (to share), we don't want to just fill the air with useless talk, either.

The Lord bless you all, and I'm just so happy to be with you tonight. So this teaching is a follow-up to our last Heaven talk, in which we gave you a long list of reasons we sometimes break fellowship with the Lord and He kinda disappears. When He's trying to get our attention about those heart attitudes and actions that are not appropriate for us as Christians, it can cause a perceptible distance in our communications with Him. And the last time we were with you in Heaven talk, we explained some of the things we have found in the past that created that perceived distance.

So tonight, I want to get on a more positive note and I want to talk to you this time about what we've discovered is going on, when we haven't done anything that would cause that distance. In other words,

when we are innocent. Well, innocent to the degree that the Lord allows us to see our conscience, that's for sure.

We know that the righteous man sins several times a day because Scripture says it, but the Lord hides a lot of those things from us until we are ready to handle it. So, I'm going to talk about the times we're praying for others that the Lord allows our well to dry out, while He's busy filling others with fresh Living Waters of His Presence. In other words, say that a soul comes to us and is really in a deep darkness, as far as speaking to the Lord and hearing from the Lord; and they feel isolated from Him, and they are asking us for prayer to feel reunited with again. Now, we know by faith that the Lord is continually with us. But if we are accustomed to hearing His voice, or seeing Him, and He withdraws - that is disconcerting, and very hurtful and difficult to weather, because we are so dependent on Him.

So, I want to talk about some of the things we have found are reasons why He does that when we're not to blame, when we've done nothing to offend Him at all. There are times when we are praying for others, as I've said, when our well dries out, when we don't feel those beautiful fresh, refreshing living waters flowing through us, but those graces are being given to ANOTHER soul who's NOT accustomed to having them, and creating a breakthrough for that soul. The Lord's heart is SO tender and touched that we would sacrifice our own comfort, our health, our consolation, for another soul that He pours out unmerited grace into that soul's life to relieve the burden THEY are carrying. I think of it as reciprocal suffering, where each member is joined together by the bonds of charity to the degree that when ONE is suffering, our hearts go out to them, that they might find relief through our prayers, and the Lord honors our prayers with a breakthrough for them, and allows us sometimes to accompany that prayer with an offering of suffering of some kind.

I Corinthians 12:26: If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are Christ's Body, and individually members of it. We are totally tied together in Christ's Body. Now when we fall in love with Jesus, and our hearts are totally given over to Him, our lives become His own unique possession, to do with as He pleases.

As He said in Matthew 16:24: If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for MY sake, will find it.

Well, take up this cross, and follow me. And what did the Lord do on His cross? He suffered for us on His cross. He's saying we, too, have a cross, and it's very much like His, except it's in our daily life. And when we suffer, we are actually participating in the redemptive work that goes on with souls as they are receiving the Lord. Now He's completely and totally opened Heaven, and that's never to be done again, redemption He's done for us on that level. But when we make offerings on OUR cross, for the sake of other souls, with His big heart He just lavishes graces on them, and we become partners in this work of sanctification in the sense that we are giving up OUR lives to the Lord for the purpose of the sanctification of that soul as well.

So, the Lord takes us at our word when He sees another soul deeply oppressed by illness, or unfortunate circumstances, and we take up the burden of praying for them. He allows us to partake in their lives by carrying a cross for them. Even Simon carried the Lord's cross. This is an expression of our love for

Christ, and our brother, that we are willing to live and give our lives for Jesus, and for His agenda, and for others.

In our teaching, "Why wasn't I healed?" I shared several situations where the Lord allowed a cross in the form of illness in our lives, and as a result, poured out unmerited grace upon those we were praying for, and they did get healed. We have also seen this dynamic in the spiritual life. We can be going along perfectly happy, tuned into the Lord, and all of a sudden, silence. And not a perceptible sign of Him anywhere. Not in worship, not in prayer, not in the Scriptures, just can't feel Him. Then we begin to wonder, "What did I do?" We know the Lord is there by faith, He's at our right hand, and He'll never leave us or forsake us. But temporarily, He's hidden himself from our spiritual perception. But, why? When our conscience doesn't convict us of any wrongdoing, I believe we can find rest in the conviction that someone ELSE is receiving OUR portion because they need it more than we do.

Again and again, I can see this happening in the 30 years of experience in counseling and praying for others. Suddenly, OUR light from the Lord dims, and later that person comes back to tell us what a breakthrough they've finally had. That oppression lifted, and they're experiencing the Lord in new and wonderful ways. Now they are on their way to an ever-deepening relationship with Him that they didn't even know existed. That is so awesomely rewarding for us to hear!

So, we found the same dynamic with healing. My husband has Fibromyalgia, and he prayed for a woman who had it as well. She was healed, but he remained in pain. Many times I have prayed for him, and he received relief, and many times he didn't. What was the difference? Same prayers, same disposition of heart and mind to be healed; same faith, and contrite for any offenses committed...but one prayer worked, and the other didn't.

We've found that those times where a healing didn't take place, others received unmerited favor and grace from the Lord. This has become such an obvious dynamic to us that, when people come to us for prayer, I ask them, "Who are you praying for?" Because very often what they want relief from, is reciprocal suffering for the ones THEY are praying for. In this case, we pray for strength to carry this cross in quiet and patience, knowing they aren't suffering in vain. That's a tremendous, tremendous consolation for people who are suffering, and it's so overlooked in the church and in the Body. Many people languish and are depressed because they can't do anything in the Body. They feel they are useless because they are sick, they can't do anything, and yet they are praying for people. What they don't understand is, their suffering is moving the heart of God to lavish graces on the people they are praying for. If only the whole church could get a look at this and understand it! How joyful people who have debilitating illnesses would be, if they had something to be happy about. My prayers are really working! Even though I'm sick, these prayers are powerful!

It's a beautiful thing, and I hope that after hearing this teaching, you'll spread the fragrance of this teaching abroad, because there are a lot of people who are sick and are very sad about it, and they feel their lives are useless. It couldn't be further from the truth! It really couldn't be, and I will show you in the Scriptures what I'm talking about.

So, have you ever experienced tremendous opposition on the way to a ministry appointment? I laugh, because I'm sure all of you have. We discovered there are a couple of dynamics that could apply in that situation. One is that the person meant to meet with us is getting opposition and considering canceling their appointment. But the Lord allows us to bear the brunt of that, in different and inconvenient

events, designed by the enemy to cause US to cancel our appointment with THEM. Many times we are carrying that soul so they won't be prevented from getting the graces God intended for them.

Other times we are suffering oppression that, through God's goodness, is moving His heart to pour out unmerited favor on the meeting, and bring about a breakthrough that might not happen without what was suffered. In any case, this opposition could have been prevented by the Lord in the first place, but He gave His approval to the demons that were causing it. Nothing happens without His approval, knowing full-well it would ultimately end in the demons' defeat, and for the soul who is afflicted, in their triumph.

What a wonderful dynamic, that our suffering in this life can lead to the release of the captives to sin. What an amazing God we serve, who doesn't let one tear drop fall to the ground unnoticed, or in vain. Rather, those who are bound in wheelchairs or plagued by other illnesses and difficulties, are POWERFUL intercessors and prayer warriors because they've forfeited their freedoms to God for the sake of others.

If they had not done it by conscious consent, we may find in eternity that they consented to this handicap even before they were born. It's so sad to see someone come from a healing service completely downcast, hopeless, because they were told, "Well, you just don't have the faith to be healed yet", or "There's still unrepentant sin in your life, you better take another look". What a slap in the face for those who are already wounded! And what a damaging lie, bordering ignorance.

Yes, by His stripes, we are healed - but what about those souls who have united themselves so closely to Jesus and what He suffered on the Cross, that they WILLINGLY bear their infirmities for the sake of others in the Body that are suffering? What about those? Or how about those preparing for revival and offering their sufferings for the church? It stands to reason that, if the blood of the martyrs is indeed the seed of the church (which is what the church father, Tertullian, said in the 2nd century) then the little martyrdoms that WE suffer every day, with patience and resignation, are moving the heart of God - and He pours unmerited grace upon those still in captivity to Satan. What tremendous hope is ours when we consider that EVERY circumstance and outcome in our lives is serving the end of bringing His Kingdom to Earth.

Now for those who haven't found relief, they can at least find relief in the reasons for their suffering. Perhaps it's a wayward grand-child, or a pending abortion, or a tragic accident that their offering is preventing through God's grace. Contrast this to the harsh invective that "you're lacking in faith", or "still in sin". How demeaning and discouraging for a soul that is clean before God.

Yet the accuser is the one lacking in wisdom and understanding of the ways of God. Let's not fall for this lie, and injure an innocent soul. Or deprive ourselves of the comfort of knowing that God uses everything for His glory, *everything*. Especially coming from a soul who is deeply in love with Him, and given Him their lives, making themselves totally, unquestionably at His disposal whether He chooses to heal them, or to use their suffering to bring relief to others. In Paul's suffering for the church, he demonstrated a profound understanding of the dynamics of salvation and healing.

In Colossians, the first chapter, he says: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for YOUR sake, and in my flesh, do I share on behalf of His body, which is the church.

Please, let's spread the healing and fragrant balm of this teaching to those who do not know why they're suffering, and bring them at least the consolation of knowing they are laboring with Christ in what they suffer on behalf of the Church, His Body.

The Lord bless you, and thanks for tuning in to our channel.

Will You Receive This Splinter From My Cross?

January 29, 2015



Good evening, YouTube family.

It's good to be back with you. In my last video, *When God is Quiet and It's Not Your Fault* we touched on two concepts that I feel the Holy Spirit wants me to go deeper with.

The first one is the meaning of the Lord's instruction to those who would follow him - deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me. Here, He was referring to the Roman manner of execution. Obviously, He was not talking about a literal death, but more of a daily death to self, a new way of thinking - not thinking of ourselves, but thinking of others.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. Matthew 16:25

This points to a whole new way of living. After giving our lives to the Lord, He is now in charge of everything that happens to us and we're no longer living just for ourselves, but for Him and His mission. His entire heart is to see the lost, saved - and the saved, sanctified in holiness of life. When He told us to pick up our cross and follow him, He was extending an invitation: join Me in the work of redemption. Some would argue that all of that is already accomplished and has no need of our help.

But Paul wrote, I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church. Colossians 1:24

So, it's obvious that there's an ongoing suffering for not only the Lord, but for the believer who's carrying a cross. So, when we gave our lives to the Lord, we embraced it, took up our cross and in carrying it, we receive a share of sufferings on behalf of His Body, the Church. We've learned that when we agree to pray for someone, there's some kind of burden added to our cross. We are to follow the example of the Lord, who gave His life for us on the Cross. He could have done it all for all time, but His great desire for His creation is to see the love in each of us - the love that we have for Him and for our brother and our willingness to help in His work, even to the point of losing our life, that His work might be completed through us.

In the twenty-two years we've been married, we've seen this dynamic over and over again. One of us will be sailing along with the wind at our backs and the other, through unavoidable circumstances, will be trudging up a slippery mountain of mud, struggling every single step of the way. Then the roles will reverse. Even as I'm speaking this tonight, Ezekiel is suffering with a health issue that would not remove itself, even after I prayed for him. Now, many times he's instantly healed when I pray, but when the Lord is adding a burden to our cross, prayer has little or no effect other than to strengthen us to persevere.

The Lord gave us a foreshadowing of this dynamic when His cross became too much to bear and the Roman soldiers met a man from Cyrene named Simon and they forced him to carry the Cross.

Matthew 27:32

I used to think carrying my cross had to do with my daily duties, inconveniences, unexpected illnesses and all the trials that come with life and raising four children. But now my understanding has been expanded and I see that I'm participating in the work of the Cross with Jesus in my own life daily. He's allowing me to demonstrate my love for Him by relieving burdens of those I'm praying for or even mystically for world conditions. There are times when a tremendous heaviness overshadows both Ezekiel and I. It may go on for days. It may lay us down flat on our backs, almost unable to move but we know it's the Lord's pain for what's taking place in the world. He has shared with us just a sliver from His Cross. Whether it be the neighbor who's just gone for an abortion after all of our prayers for her or the poor in a third world country where women and children were brutally murdered.

For in Him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

Well, He may not enlighten our understanding as to the reasons for these burdens, lest we swell with pride. Nonetheless, He's sharing with us another sliver of His Cross. It even seems to me that the mother of Jesus was suffering terribly when He was in the garden. And I would not be at all surprised to learn that the cup of liquid given Him by the angel to strengthen Him were the tears of Mary, for surely she laid her life on the altar alongside her son's. She consented. She supported because she knew what His mission was. I'm sure that it cost her dearly. And this ties into my second point.

Prayer does not have to be well-formed sentences or even words to be fervent. Fervent is defined as passionate, intense, vehement, ardent, sincere and heartfelt. For years I beat myself up for not having long, emotional prayers even though the prayers were many times answered and it is written that,

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

These prayers escaping our hearts and mouths without even a word formed are nothing less than flames of brotherly love rising up to the altar of heaven and supplication begging mercy.

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. Romans 8:26

Although here, Scriptures referring to the utterances of the Holy Spirit from within us, who is to say that these groans for those in dire need are not linked to the sentiments of our Holy Spirit? There are those who would argue that Jesus doesn't suffer anymore. But knowing my Lord as I do, I have seen Him cry and I know He suffers with every human being, every animal and creature on this Earth that He created. If they suffer, He suffers. He's not some cosmic force, some non-human, distant and detached as some religions depict him. No, we're made in His image and He is far more compassionate and tender than we can possibly comprehend. His ways are higher than the heavens. Our's crawl along blindly in the dust to a spinning ball. There's simply no comparison to His sufferings over human tragedy every single hour of the day. How can anyone say that He no longer suffers when an unborn child is cut piece by piece out of its mother's womb?

So, when we see suffering and our spirit recoils in pain, our prayer has already ascended to Heaven. The very sigh of consternation is itself a complete statement and a petition for the Lord to arise and relieve

that suffering. So, no longer do I condemn myself for not praying eloquently for others or shedding tears and travailing. Simple truth is that ache in my heart is a loud cry to Heaven for the Lord to come and deliver that soul. We can be bound by legalisms now to what constitutes prayer, what we witnessed in mature prayer group leaders, and impose those standards on ourselves. But the simple truth, is a fervent prayer of the righteous is a cry to Heaven that moves upon the heart of a tender God and very often nothing further needs to embellish that cry.

I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't travail in prayer, or be more specific, or persevere till we feel a release. Each situation is different and there are times for travail and times for perseverance as well. I'm only saying that prayer escapes our hearts without even our intentional consent. And when that happens, I believe the Lord graciously gives us a burden to carry for that soul. It could be a toothache, a flat tire, an accident, a feeling of exhaustion, an unexpected bill that causes concern. It can take any form at all, as long as it is for us a suffering. This again ties into carrying our daily cross.

So, my point is simply, don't be surprised if you become aware of a situation that grieves your heart and simultaneously you find yourself in the midst of unexpected problems. It could very well be the Lord permitting you to carry a burden on your cross for your brother or sister, and I'm not the least bit surprised if inconveniences just spring up out of the ground for no reason at all. I recognize them as splinters of the Lord's cross that He's graciously sharing with me. As He is seeing my response in cooperation to carry this new burden of love for Him and my brother, His heart is moved to greater and greater compassion and soon the soul is relieved of their trial through the mercy of God and our Lord is deeply edified that we would give up our life for a complete stranger. By these acts, we resemble Him more and more. And when the Lord comes for His Bride who will He be looking for? The very ones who carried the splinters from His Cross, for they will resemble him.

God bless you, Youtube family and thank you for listening.

song Restrepo, Musical Memories of Columbia, SA Instrumental

January 29, 2015



song Caridad music from memories of Mission Trip in SA Instrumental

January 29, 2015

