

Developing Spiritual Hunger, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

When Jesus walked the earth, all the fullness of God dwelled in Him. All that there was of God dwelled in the Lord Jesus when He was on the earth. Now turn to Ephesians 3. I'm going to show you a staggering verse. All the fullness of God that dwelled in the Lord Jesus is made available in the holy place so that you and I can know the same fullness.

In Ephesians 3:19, Paul is praying that we might know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, so that you “might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19). He didn't say that Jesus would be filled up with the fullness of God. Paul the apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, “This is my prayer: that you people would know God's love and that you would be filled up with the same fullness of God in which the Lord Jesus walked when He was on the earth.”

GOD WILL EXPRESS HIS GLORY THROUGH REDEEMED HUMAN BEINGS

The desire of God is that His people might experience the fullness that the Lord Jesus walked in. It says in Hebrews 10 that He has opened the holy place, and God has said that we're to draw near to a position that the angels could never, never live in (Heb. 10:19-22). The angels, the devils, every creature that understands it would love to be in the holy place. God says that we're to draw near to it like no other created being and that we alone stand in the position of being able and qualified to experience the fullness of all that God has. In 2 Corinthians 4—don't turn to it; I've referred to it many times—Paul the apostle refers to this concept. He says it this way: “that the life of the Lord Jesus would be manifested through us” (2 Cor. 4:10-11, paraphrased).

Also, in the same chapter, he talks about the gospel that brings to man God's glory: that God would express His glory through human beings who are redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus (v. 4-6). I define the glory of God as God's character and His power being manifested in us. The intention of God when He saved us was this: that He would give us the exalted position as sons of God. We've gone into great detail on the exalted nature of the position God has given us, that we alone occupy the highest position any creature can possess, as the sons of the living God, with the same status as the Lord Jesus. God says that His glory was to rest upon us. His glory was to be manifested through us.

WE WERE MADE TO WALK IN THE FULLNESS OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD

This verse says that we're to walk in the fullness of God and the fullness of God's character; we're to understand His love, His holiness, His wisdom and His majestic glory. We're to receive it; we're to see it. God, by His Spirit, wants to draw us into a real union with God so that we actually comprehend God's love and His holiness and all of His characteristics. Then, after we see them, we're to manifest them through our own lives; so that when people see us, the Word of God says in 2 Corinthians 2:14 that they'll see God, and we will bring the knowledge of God everywhere we go. Through the words we speak, when we lay hands on people, the power that comes from us, and the very countenance of our being, we will bring the knowledge of God wherever we go, just as Jesus did.

That's the intention of God. That's not a burdensome thing. The prophecy that Rich brought forward—oh, man, that touched my spirit. It's a lie straight from hell that God is trying to put a rock on your back to crush you; that's not what He's trying to do. God says: “No, no, you've missed it. It's not a burdensome lifestyle. It's not a

discipline that's unbecoming to the one who understands." He says, "I've opened up the holy place. I'm giving you what every creature longs for, and that's the seed of God dwelling in you, and My life manifested through you. I will put My glory on you like I did My own Son, because you're sons of God."

IT'S NOT A BURDENSOME DEMAND; IT'S A LIFE-GIVING PROMISE

That's not a burdensome thing. When it pierced my heart—the truth that the glory of God is waiting, that God wants to pour His glory out on us, that the glory and the dominion of sonship is to be ours and it's ours to the degree that we want it; that when we come before the holy place, we're coming there so that we might manifest that glory and that dominion to the world and experience the joy of it—I understood that this was not a burden. Those verses are promises. They aren't burdensome to man. God isn't putting His finger in my nose, saying: "You rotten, undisciplined Christian that got your priorities out of line! Start spending time in prayer!" That's not what God is saying. He's saying: "Son, son, son, wake up, wake up. Don't you understand what I've done? Don't you understand? Haven't you read the story and the life of the Lord Jesus?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"Oh, Father, it was a great story of a man who walked so closely to you it was unbelievable."

God said, "You've missed the point: that the Lord Jesus was to be the pattern. He was to be the inspiration of what I desire all sons of God to be, so that when you read His life it provoked and stirred you with the reality of the possibility of what any man can experience in his own life."

When you read the story of the Lord Jesus in the gospels, it's to stir you. It's to provoke you, and then the desire of your heart is this: "O God, is it possible that we could live in such a dimension of life?"

Then Hebrews 10 comes to mind. He says, "Hey, the holy place is wide open to anyone who wants it." That's not a burdensome demand; it's a life-giving promise. How many of you want more of God? How many of you want to understand more of God? How many of you would like to express more of God to the world? Well, then I've got very good news for you: God has invited you to draw near to the holy place. He has invited you to be a recipient of the glory that He gives only His Son, and His *sons* plural. He won't give it to the cherubim or the seraphim. He won't even give it to the twenty-four elders that sit before His throne. He'll only manifest that glory through His family, His own seed, and that's what we are. The seed of God is in our spirits, that you might be filled up to the fullness. Get that word. Let that thing weigh in your heart. I don't know if that challenges you; does it? It's the fullness of God dwelling in me, the fullness of God being expressed through all of you. I tell you, I've got a different standard. I'm pathetically bored with the level of Christianity I've been living with. When I read Hebrews 10, I say: "Oh God, what in the world have I settled for? I haven't known any of Your fullness. I've been pushed around by wrong desires and emotions, weighed down with weakness, and the devil has had his hand on me. You mean to tell me I can express the same fullness that the Lord Jesus expressed?"

God says, "You're starting to understand the gospel of the glory of God, a gospel that brings God's glory and gives it to man." Amen.

GOD HAS GIVEN EACH OF US A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF TALENT

Now I went into detail on Sunday, and I won't do that today because it takes too much time. Get the tape if you're interested. I made the distinction between the talents and the different folds. God says He has given to every man a different amount of talents, so that we will all have a different ability or anointing from God to bring His glory publicly. We will have different amounts of anointing in terms of our public influence. Some of us will affect ourselves and just a small number around us. Some of us will affect cities, and God raises up some to affect nations. So God has given to every one of us a different talent: some one talent, some five talents, some ten talents.

PURSUING AND LIVING IN HUNDREDFOLD ZEAL AND INTENSITY

Now I'm not saying that you'll have the amount of public use that Jesus had; that's not what I'm saying. But I'm saying you can have the same dominion in your own life that He had. You can have the same dominion in the lives of the people who surround you that He had. You might not affect a whole village and a whole city; it depends on the talent God gave you. But the thing that I'm interested in is this: what fold are you living in? Are you living in thirty-fold, sixty-fold or a hundredfold? Matthew 13 and Mark 4 talk about the different levels of intensity and the different levels of hunger that men would have. The object of your life isn't to get God to give you more talents than His sovereign will has given you. You'll never get more from God than He has purposed for you, never.

The desire of my heart is to see a people living in a hundred-fold Christianity, who are pursuing God at, and living in, 100 percent of what He has given us. I don't think there's anyone in this room—though maybe there is!—who's living in hundredfold Christianity. You're pursuing God in a way that the Spirit of God can't even bring an increase because you're absolutely in every dimension of your life fully yielded, 100 percent; you're pursuing God with every ounce of understanding that you have. Now that's what God is asking people to do. That's what I'm purposing to do. How many are purposing to obey God with 100 percent zeal and intensity, where everything He shows you to do you'll do with your whole heart? I tell you, if we get about five people walking at a hundredfold level, even if God has only given us one talent apiece, we will turn this city upside down.

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS”

OK, now, here's the law of God. Turn to Matthew 5. This is where we left off last week. I tried to turn to Matthew 5, and someone told me, “You never told us the verse.” We got to Matthew 5 and that's as far as we got. Here's the law of God: God gives to the hungry. That's His law. That's the law in which God operates. Like I said on Sunday, I'm not talking about salvation, because God called you when you had no desire for Him. I'm saying, as a born-again believer, God is going to give you what you're hungry for, no more and no less.

Let's read verse 6. It says: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Mt. 5:6). Jesus is commending those people who stir themselves up to hunger and thirst for God. You may not know this, but you've got to stir yourself up to be hungry. Hunger isn't just a natural byproduct of a passive life. When I want the hunger of God to be kindled in my heart, I put myself in a position that stimulates spiritual hunger in me.

What do I mean by that? I say, “God.” Well, I’m saying, “God.” It’s not a matter of, “Maybe you should do it this way...” This is how you do it. I say: “Father, I want the zeal of God to rise in my heart. I want to be the hungriest man for God in this whole nation. I don’t want there to be anyone hungrier for God than I am.”

God says: “OK, if you mean that, let’s do this. You put yourself in a position where the hunger of God will be stirred up in you.”

So I give myself to the Word. I give myself to prayer. I give myself to testifying of the things of God. I give myself to fasting. I give myself to worship because I know that if I give myself to those things the hunger is going to increase. God says, “If you put yourself in that position, I’ll respond by the spirit of grace producing a greater hunger in your heart.”

Turn to Isaiah 42. Keep your finger here, though. God alone knows the number of times I’ve said to Him in my own heart, “God, my heart is absolutely dead right now.” How many have ever felt your heart is dead? Well, what do you do when your heart is dead? Let me tell you what to do when your heart is dead. I said, “God, I’m so insensitive. Sometimes I feel my heart is so blessed and sometimes I feel so far from God it’s unbelievable. I don’t even know how You use me sometimes.” I’m not on some big humble kick. Sometimes I’m really aware of my deadness.

God says, “Well, the truth of the matter is, you’re dead. Not that you’re just sensing it; it’s true. You’re not living in nearly the amount of things I have for you.”

So do you know what I do? I start scheduling time in prayer. How many of you know when you first start praying, prayer isn’t very exciting? When you’re just walking around praying, beginning to read to the Word. I mean, when I’ve come off a dry spell, reading the Word and spending time with God, I’m thinking, “Lord, You know I would rather be out running around doing something right now.”

I would rather be watching TV; I would rather be “fellowshipping.” Sometimes we do a lot of good fellowshiping, you know, but there’s a difference. Chitchatting isn’t fellowshiping. Fellowshiping is sharing the life of God, one with another, but when I’m not in the Spirit, when I’m not really walking with God, I don’t do much fellowshiping; I do lots of chitchatting with Christians. But I know it’s not fellowshiping, I just don’t tell them.

“Boy, a good time of fellowship!”

“Yeah,” you say, “we never talked about the Lord the whole time.”

“It’s a good time in godly fellowship.”

But what do I when I find myself in those positions? Hopefully we don’t get there too often. Then I start giving myself to things that I know will produce hunger in my life. I do things where I know the Spirit of God will respond and produce a zeal in me if I do those things.

A MAN WHO WOULD NOT FAIL NOR BE DISCOURAGED

Look at Isaiah 42. I just have to read this one verse. It's not my main verse, but I simply have to read this. This passage is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. Verses 1-13 are a prophecy of Jesus, and then, from verse 14 to the end of the chapter, it's a prophecy of the Church coming out of the Dark Ages. But anyway, verse 4 is a prophecy of Jesus, giving the details that you never find in the New Testament. The Spirit of God on Isaiah says, "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law" (Isa. 42:4).

It says Jesus was a man who would not be discouraged. When I read that I said, "Oh God, I want to be like that." I don't care how dry it is at times; I don't care what I have to do. I won't be discouraged or crushed, because that's the way Jesus was. How many of you know that if you're the discouraged type, you won't get far with God until He has matured you out of that? If you're easily discouraged, you won't get far. God will bring you out of that little by little. Boy, you've got to get to the place where you're steadfast, where it makes no difference what's in front of your face; you're hanging on. You're doing those things that stir up hunger in you.

Look at verse 13; oh, I love this! "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies" (Isa. 42:13).

Here's the point: that even God stirs up His own zeal. There was a point in time where Jesus Christ aroused and stirred up His own zeal, and He came down, and it says He made bare His holy arm and brought salvation to the earth. He aroused Himself.

"THERE IS NONE . . . WHO STIRS HIMSELF UP TO TAKE HOLD OF YOU"

Turn to Isaiah 64:7. Now this is a rebuke. It's not to us necessarily. I believe this was written to the Church in the Dark Ages, where for a thousand years the Church was in absolute darkness. From about 400 AD to about 1500 AD, it was utter death and darkness in the Church. It's also talking about Israel before Jesus came. So it's fulfilled naturally in Israel and spiritually in the Dark Ages of the Church. We will talk more about that some other time. Look at verse 7; here's what God was saying to the people, but it applies to us. There's application today. It says there was no one who calls on God's name; there was none who aroused himself to take hold of God (Isa. 64:7).

PUTTING YOURSELF IN A POSITION WHERE THE SPIRIT WILL FILL YOU WITH ZEAL

Now that was the characteristic of the Dark Ages. God says, "The problem I had with the Church is that there were very few people who would arouse themselves to take hold of God and stand firm." Now I believe it's possible that some of us in this room aren't arousing ourselves and taking hold of God. I believe that most of you are. As a matter of fact, I know that most of you are. Here's the point: it takes a person who arouses himself to have spiritual hunger. Spiritual hunger is a byproduct of the Spirit of God doing something in your life. You can't produce a desire for God, but you can get into a position where God will produce it in you. You understand that. You can't just say, "I love God, I want to love God, I want to love God, I want to love God." You talk about it and all of a sudden, "toot, toot," you know, you just start loving God. It doesn't happen that way. A zeal for God comes from the Holy Spirit, but you can put yourself in a position where the Holy Spirit will put zeal in you. He won't put zeal in you when you're watching TV five nights a week. It won't happen that way.

Go back to Matthew 5. Jesus said, “Blessed is the person who stirs himself up and arouses himself to spiritual hunger” (Mt. 5:6, paraphrased), because something great is going to happen: they’re going to be satisfied. That means two things. That means they’re going to get all of God they want; they’re going to be satisfied with the portion of God that they get. How many of you are unsatisfied right now? Oh, man, I’m desperately unsatisfied. I want all of God; I want the fullness of God. That’s what He has promised. Jesus died on the cross so that Mike Bickle could know the fullness of God while he’s in this age. I want the fullness of God. That’s what God said I could have, and that’s what I want. I’m not satisfied yet. God said if I continue to arouse my hunger to pursue God, I’ll be satisfied.

“Lord, I’ve got a big standard—Your standard.”

“That’s good, son.”

UNTIL WE’RE CONTENT, WE CAN’T OPERATE IN FAITH

Secondly, you’ll be satisfied in the sense that you’ll be totally content in life. I don’t want you to raise your hands, but there are some of you out there who have all these desires waging war against you, and you’re not content at all. You know what I’m talking about. You’re thinking, “Oh, I’m just not happy.” God says that if you hunger and thirst for God, He’ll take all those desires and take them out of your heart. You’ll be a totally contented person. So not only are you going to get all of God that you want, but you’ll be absolutely established in peace, and there will be no unmet need even in your emotional life. Wouldn’t it be great to just sit back and say, “Lord, I wish I could think of something I want, but there’s nothing I want”? That’s the type of thing God wants for us.

You know why? I want you to hear this; it’s a very important thing that I’m saying: until we’re content, we can’t operate in faith. As long as there’s a storm inside of you, you can’t move in mighty faith. I can explain that some other time, but that’s just a fact to get hold of. Until you’re at peace in your own spirit, until you’re content, you’ll never have faith that brings God’s power in a dramatic, dynamic way, never. So it’s essential that we hunger for God or we will never, ever really have faith.

So are you going to start exposing your mind? Well, not start; by the grace of God, I know a lot of you are doing it. But let’s expose our minds and our time and our schedules to things that will produce more zeal in our heart. Let’s arouse a greater zeal. How many of you are for that? Now I want God. God says He’ll give us His fullness. He said the Lord Jesus had the fullness and we can have the fullness, that I can walk as He walked on the earth (1 Jn. 2:6). Well, why aren’t I? Because I must admit that I’m not living in the knowledge of God the Lord Jesus has, but I’ll tell you one thing: I’m going to start pursuing. Well, not start; hopefully we’ve been doing it.

HUNGER IS AN ESCORT TO THE DEEPER THINGS OF GOD

Hunger is a magnificent power. Hunger drives a man. Nations have learned that they can do almost anything to another nation until the people get hungry. Because there’s a certain desperation that comes when hunger is present, isn’t there? When you get a people hungry, they start getting violent. God says that when a man puts himself in a position where the Spirit of God would pour hunger in his heart, if he gets a hunger first in his spirit, “Watch out, devil,” because he’ll lay everything aside to have God. A hungry man gets hold of God, believe me. That’s the law of God. God always gives to the hungry.

Now it says this: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Righteousness is rightness. It’s the rightness of God. We need the rightness of God in our bodies, in our souls, and in our spirits—in all three dimension of man. We need God’s rightness in our body. We need to get hungry and desperate for God to bring healing to our body and everyone to whom God has joined us. I’m desperate for God to bring healing to every person in this room whom God has brought to be a part of this family. I really mean that. God is my witness: in my own private life, I’m finding a desperate cry in my heart for people in this body who aren’t getting healed whom God wants to heal. I want the rightness of God in their body. I want the rightness of God in our soul. I want God’s rightness in our spirit. I want to be totally right with God, body, soul, spirit, with His fullness being expressed in us body, soul, and spirit, in all three dimensions.

The hungry people get answers. Passive people don’t get answers. Hungry people do get answers. You know what, though? God sometimes just stands up and meets the passive man and gives his answers anyway. Sometimes God just bends down to the man who’s sluggardly and lazy and gives him what he wants without even asking. But the rule of God is that He gives to the hungry. That’s the rule that motivates God. We have to have our hearts so joined with God. We have to begin to get desperate for God.

OK, turn to Matthew 7. Here’s my point: I want you to know that there’s glory awaiting you. I know that until we get really hungry, I mean desperately hungry, that glory will only be ours in theory. All I’m trying to do is stir you up so that you walk out of this place thinking: “Oh God, oh Lord, I’m rearranging my whole life, all my priorities. I’m going to put myself in a position where I become really hungry because I long for the fullness of God.” That’s all I’m trying to say. I could end right now, but I won’t. I’m going to keep telling you over and over. I’m asking God, by His Spirit, to probe your conscience and to prick you and to make you just miserable if you’re not doing this; to get you so full of zeal to go do it that you’ll leave here and say, “Ooh...” You know what I mean. That’s how I want your heart when you leave this meeting tonight.

THERE’S NOTHING THAT GOD WON’T GIVE US IF WE’RE TRULY DESPERATE FOR IT

Matthew 7:7 is a verse that I’ve used so many times; I’ve shared it a number of times in my pursuit of God. It says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Mt. 7:7-8).

Now literally, the word *ask* in Greek means a continual asking; it means, “Keep asking, keep asking, keep asking.” God says that the man who knocks and seeks and asks, if he persists, will find satisfaction for the hunger in his soul. God will give him satisfaction. I tell you, there’s nothing that God won’t give us—as long as it’s in the Word of God—if we’re desperate for it. Don’t raise your hand, but how many of you have a temper problem? Get desperate and you’ll get rid of it. I’m telling you, you get desperate and you’ll get rid of it.

But I’m not into just getting over my problem; I mean God forbid that we would stop at that point. Who wants to just get over their problems? I want to bring the saving power of God to the city. There are 500,000 people going to hell in South County alone; half a million people in this area are going straight into the region of darkness for eternity. I’m not interested in just getting rid of anger. I need the glory of God on my life so that I can bring a gospel that will bring people into the knowledge of God. My neighborhood desperately needs God, and I’m in my neighborhood and I’m not bringing the knowledge of God to them, and I will keep knocking and beating on the door until they begin to experience the glory of God—the glory that God promised in my experience.

See, God now dwells in my spirit. I'll never have more of God than I have now, but as I walk in a consciousness of God and of His power in me, if I'm to build that consciousness, I'll find the character of God, that aroma, that fragrance of God springing forth from my very countenance. And people are going to want to know who God is, I'm telling you. But, like I said, I'm not interested in just whipping all my little hang-ups. Man, I've got a world on my heart. We all do. We have a city on our heart.

“O God!” Knock and keep knocking. “God, we want the fullness of God for this fellowship. God, I want the fullness of God and nothing less for my life. God, I'm not settling for respectable, cute, charismatic meetings where we get a nice little flow in the Spirit for about ten minutes and everyone is happy.”

I mean, I'm happy, I'm grateful for that, but I leave these meetings and I say, “O God, we're desperately in need of more of this.” We need more than a few little people falling down under the power of the Spirit and two or three salvations. We need a half a million people to see the knowledge of God. I'm grateful; oh, God knows I'm grateful for the small amount of His flow that we're experiencing, but oh, man, my heart reads the Word of God and I say, “God, when I see what we're doing and I compare it to the Scriptures, we're falling miserably short of what You've got waiting for us.”

God says: “You've got the point. I've got it waiting for you. You've got the idea.”

It doesn't condemn me; it encourages me. I'm not saying, “Oh, we're so terrible.” I'm saying, “Oh God, You've got the fullness waiting for us.” We're getting little drippings, a small amount of rain here and there. But God said that He made a way where the holy place was available to this fellowship. I said, “Oh God, that's all I need to know.” The holy place is ours, and we will bring the glory of God into this place. We will bring it to this county, and I want every single born-again believer and church and pastor in this city to have it.

I don't want us to have it; I don't care about us. I just care about the people going to hell. That's what I care about. I don't want everyone to do it in this little building, even if we get a building with 50,000 people. I want all the people of God to prosper, because there are people going to hell. It's a reality. It's a reality now, and when it begins to grip your heart, you start thinking, “Man.” I don't care what it is; if something becomes the supreme cry of your heart, God is going to answer it. When it's the paramount issue of your life, God is going to meet you. I tell you on the authority of this verse, God says when it becomes the supreme cry of your heart, then heaven is going to move and answers are going to come. The cry of my heart and the cry of many of you is, “O God, just let's go way beyond our personal experience. O God, we want to bring power for the community. God, we want to bring power to heal the saints who are broken in spirit and in body and soul.”

“God,” I said, “I want a fellowship where everyone is healed, where everyone is in emotional contentment and fulfillment, and where everyone is spiritually strong, not just me and a few elders and a handful of leaders.” Everyone is moving in fullness, everyone. That's the desire of my heart.

And the Lord said, “Get desperate; get desperate.” Wait on God. The holy place is yours; the fullness of God is there. Get desperate for God, and when it becomes the only thing that dominates your heart, God is going to stand up in heaven. He's going to move. Things are going to happen.

Is anyone getting desperate for God? I know a bunch of you are. I know it. Some of you are way down the road from me, so you just hang on and wait for me to catch up with you and we will have a great time together. You get hold of Matthew 7 and read that some more. Boy, that's a heavy promise.

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE”

Turn to Matthew 11. This is a verse I like. I like all these verses, but this is a good one. Look at what He says in verse 11: “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Mt. 11:11). See, John never entered into the status of sonship that we have. John died under the Old Covenant and he went to heaven and then he was a son of God, but when John the Baptist was on the earth, he never, ever was one spirit with God like you and I are. So that the least person who is born again by the Spirit of God has a greater standing than John did in this age.

Anyway, go to verse 12. Oh, glory to God! “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (Mt. 11:12). Now Jesus isn't speaking of a wicked violence. When the average person thinks of violence, they think, “Oh, someone is doing wrong to someone else.” Violence means an earnestness of desire, a violent desire, an absolute giving of yourself to doing something. It's a violent desire for God. It says the kingdom of God is suffering or allowing violence. The word *suffer* means “to allow.” It's allowing violence to take place. God stands back and says, “Violent men, men who are so moved in their spirit with desire, those men will come up and take the kingdom by the sheer pressure and force of their violence.”

God has ordained it that way. God isn't up in heaven being reluctant, and some man sneaks up there and steals a little authority and runs away and angels take a shot at him and miss him and he says, “Ha, ha, I stole it!” That's not it. God has ordained that the violent spirit is the spirit that will get God. We find this tremendous picture of glory that God has for the Church and for the saints, and we see the experience that we're having. We say, “God there's so much glory and so little strength; what's the problem?”

God said, “There needs to be a measure of violence that brings your experience up to what I've promised you.”

Violence is what's going to bring it to us, a spirit that's so desperate for God that we can't be refused. It will happen, I'm telling you.

HE WITHHOLDS FROM THOSE WHO ARE FULL, AND GIVES TO THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY

Keep your finger in Matthew and go to Mark 4. This is a great verse here. He delights. I'm telling you, you there's something about the heart of God. It's a law of God. It's a law of God. Get this in your head. It's a law of God: He responds to the hungry. He withholds from those who are full, and He gives to those who are hungry. He withholds His hand from those who are full. The rebuke that He had for the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3 was that they didn't feel any great need for anything. They were at their meetings, and they were happy. He says, “You think you're rich.” He says, “You're poor, you're blind, you're wretched, and you're naked, and you don't even know it. You think you're doing well, but I've got so much more for you. But you're passive and you don't even know the state you're in” (Rev. 3:17, paraphrased).

UNTIL WE WAKE UP, WE WILL NEVER BE STIRRED UP

Now I want to say this, not as a condemnation to any of us, but until we wake up, we will never be stirred up. We're not moving in the power of God; we're not moving in what God has for us. That doesn't condemn me; that provokes me. I'm not saying that like we're terrible people. I don't think we have been desperately hungry, but I tell you one thing: we will be desperately hungry. I don't care what we were in the past; I'm concerned about what we will be in the future. We will be a people—mark my word—with such a name that when people talk about us, they're going to say, "I don't know much about that group, but one thing is for sure: they are zealous as can be. I've never seen people who pursue God like that group." That's the name we will have, by the grace of God. Not that I'm interested in what people would say, because I'm not, but I want us so characterized by a spirit of hunger.

GLORY ALWAYS COMES AFTER HUNGER

You know what, though? Then they'll have to say after that, "Boy, they sure have the glory of God," because glory always comes after hunger. Glory has to come when hunger is there. Glory has to come when hunger is there. God rises up off His throne and He gives to the hungry. The sheer hunger in our heart is going to cause God to stand up and to give us the thing that's in His heart to give us. Our hunger is really, literally going to pull Him off His throne.

Now you say, "Wait a second, God is sovereign..."

Well, the Spirit of God is going to produce the hunger that's going to do it. Then we will give ourselves to God in such a way that He can put a hunger in our hearts. We will ask and we will get. We will knock and the door will open. We will seek and we will see God's glory in our individual lives and in this corporate body. I'm prophesying, by the way. I'm telling you the future. I really mean that. I'm not an excited, crazy preacher. Well, I might be those two things, but I'm more than that. I'm more than just excited and fanatical; I know that I'm prophesying. I know in my spirit that I'm declaring the future to us. I'm not just positive; I know I'm speaking the oracle of God to a seed here. That's what I know that I'm doing. Believe me, I'm not just trying to get you excited. I know I'm speaking the word of God to this seed. We're just a seed of what God is going to do.

"TO YOU WHO HEAR, MORE WILL BE GIVEN"

Look at Mark 4:24. This is right after verse 20, where He talks about the thirty-fold, the sixty-fold, and the hundredfold. So in context, they're pursuing the Lord in a diligent hunger. He says, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given" (Mt. 4:24). That means this. I've told you God wants to give you the fullness of God, right? Haven't I said that? I've said that, right? This passage isn't warning you about hearing wrong things. It's urging us to fully hear the right things. I've told you a truth that I fear that maybe we're not hearing. The Word of God says God wants to give the fullness of God to believers. Now this passage says: "Be very careful and listen to that. Hear Him with the depth of your heart. Honor that thing in your heart. Let it pierce your heart. Let it grip you that God wants to give us fullness." So be very careful that you hear this. Don't let this word go in one ear and out the other. Be diligent. Say, "No, no, no, God, that word isn't getting away from me. Ephesians 3:19: that word isn't getting out of my heart! I will have the fullness of God."

THE PROGRESSION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR SPIRIT

“Be very careful to what you listen to.” Listen to what He says next: “By your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you, and more shall be given you besides. Whoever has, to him more shall be given, and whoever doesn’t have, what he has shall be taken away from him” (Mt. 4:24b-25, paraphrased).

Now I’ve talked on this a few times, but it’s a good passage to bring up over and over. There’s a progression in your spiritual development. You’re either progressing forward, or you’re progressing backward. There’s no such thing as staying the same. There’s no such thing as a static condition in life. You’re either gaining weight or you’re losing weight. You’re either getting closer to the Lord or you’re getting further away.

Now I’m not talking about drastic measures. You aren’t going to take huge steps closer to God every day. But you’re moving a little closer, one way or the other, every day. God is talking about your standard of measure, the amount that you want and the amount that you expect. What’s your standard of measure? What’s the standard that you’re giving to God? How big is the cup that you’re asking God to fill? What’s your standard of measure? Ephesians 3:19 talks about the fullness of God. Colossians 2:9 says Jesus is living the fullness of God. I want to see the fullness of God to the measure of the stature that belonged to Jesus. That’s what I want: that human beings would literally live as sons of God. He has manifested His character and His power in the dimension that the Lord Jesus did.

WE’LL LOSE EVERYTHING WE’RE LIVING IN IF WE DON’T STAY HUNGRY FOR GOD

This is a heavy verse. Jesus said, “Be very careful.” You see, the reason He told them to be careful is so that we would listen to this. Then—I know He was thinking this—He said, “I know many throughout all the ages of the Church are going to miss that I’m saying this. Be very careful that you hear what I’m saying, because it’s so easy to miss this.” According to your standard it will be given, and you’ll be given more and more and more than you even think. If you have a low standard, you’ll just backslide to nothing to passivity and darkness, and what you’re living in today, you’ll lose tomorrow.

Undoubtedly some of you have done this; I know that I have. I’ve lived in a dimension of God, and then a year later fell away from it, and I didn’t live in the good of it. Has that happened to anyone else? You’re living in something one year, and a year later you look back and say, “Father God, what happened? I’m not living in the freshness of that any more.” That’s what it means. Even what they have they’re going to lose if they get passive. We could lose everything we’re experiencing today if we don’t stay hungry for God. We need to stay hungry for God and offer up the measuring cup that the Word of God describes. How big is your measuring cup? Man, we have to have a big one. I’m not trying to be funny. We have to have the same cup that God, in His Word, tells us we should have. That’s that we’re sons of God expressing His life; His glory is upon us, filled up to the fullness of God. That’s the cup.

Because if that’s your standard, and you’re hungry for it and you absolutely refuse to be denied that standard, you get violent for that John the Baptist spirit and you say, “God, I’m not radiating the life of God in the way that I should. God, my neighborhood doesn’t even know that I’m here, and they’re certainly not all saved. I haven’t prayed for anyone and seen them healed. I haven’t led anyone to the Lord in three years. Oh God, I’m desperate to manifest Your life.”

God says, “If you get hungry, if you get a big standard, you will get the thing your heart desires.” Let’s pray.