

Elisha

Part 3

Speaker	Frank Wallace
Duration	00:50:16
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/fw020/elisha

Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:01] Tonight we want to say a few words about this remarkable servant of God, and especially in connection with Holmes. The two incidents that we have read together are connected with two Holmes, Holmes of a different character. The first one is connected with a house in a desolate condition.

Death had come in, and because of death, debt.

And following upon debt, very serious threat that two sons were going to be taken into bondage because of this debt.

Very desolate house indeed. We might almost call it a bleak house, but I think we'll see at the end there are great expectations. We find the prophet with his power and ability bringing great blessing into this home.

Now this, I believe, provides a beautiful picture of conditions that might prevail and have prevailed amongst the people of God. [00:01:11] But first of all, we want to get the picture correct in our minds. This woman, her husband died. I think it's reasonable to infer that because he died, her means of support was gone, and she was unable to care for the requirements of her home and her children, and steadily her resources disappeared until eventually she was in debt. The creditor comes along and he says, I want my money. I haven't got any, she says. Well, I'll take your two sons, and I'll use them. I'll make them slaves. They'll be bondmen to me. Well, she calls upon the man of God, and he asks what she wants him to do. When she doesn't reply, he says, now what have you got in the house? [00:02:03] Have you any resources at all? Have you no assets at all? Nothing that you can use to meet this matter? She says, all that I've got is a pot of oil. All right, he said. Go to your neighbors and ask if they'll give you some vessels, pots, bottles, leather and bottles, anything that was available to hold water, wine or oil, oil in this case. Well, she did so and gathered a few. Now, says the man of God, start and pour out from your pot of oil into these vessels. And one by one, they got filled up. Until they were all filled up to the brim. And she had no more vessels to fill. That was the end. The oil stayed. Things were back to their normal character. But there they were, pots of oil all ready. Beautiful oil. [00:03:01] Now, says the man of God, go and sell some. And when you get your money in, go and pay off your debt. Go and pay off your debt. Plenty here, quite sufficient. And he says, there's plenty left over so that you can live a normal life. No more fear of debt. No more fear of your sons going into bondage. Well, that's a very beautiful picture, that. Beautiful picture. We're impressed by the miraculous power that was exercised by the servant of God.

It makes us think of a time later on. When the Lord Jesus Christ took a few fishes and a few loaves. And multiplied them exceedingly. Till thousands of people were satisfied. It makes us think of a statement. I think it was a dear woman who made the statement. Little is much if God is in it.

[00:04:01] And that's exactly what we find in this incident. God, through his servant, is intervening.

And what we might call very meagre supplies are turned into abundant resources. Well, that's a good lesson for us. Because we often feel how poor our faith is. How insignificant is our power. How meagre our spiritual supply is. And so we're frightened to embark on any service or any testimony for the Lord. Because we feel our utter weakness. But in such conditions, the Lord is able to come in and use those supplies. And abundantly bring forth from them his own power and blessing. And that's something we need to learn. I believe there is a specific lesson for us to learn here. What does oil represent in scripture? We know that there were four classes of people who were anointed with oil in the Old Testament. [00:05:06] Kings, prophets, priests, and lepers.

They were all anointed with oil. Well, not one of us is likely to become a king, a prophet, or a priest. But we all come in the category of lepers. We've all been sinners, each one of us. And we all require saved. And we all require the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We believe that this anointing with oil finds the antitype in the New Testament where we find the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You remember in the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Peter says that God anointed Jesus Christ with power and with the Holy Spirit.

In the second epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks about the anointing and the earnest being upon the people of God. [00:06:07] John speaks about an anointing from the Holy One. Now all this is connected with the Holy Spirit. So I think it's easy to see that the anointing with oil in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment with the anointing of the Spirit in the New. So, oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. Now then, we think of this, the abundant resources that are to be found in the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Is there anything in the New Testament that corresponds to this kind of condition? Real believers becoming so spiritually low that they were in danger of being brought into bondage.

And the ministry of the Lord through his servant bringing in the truth of the Holy Spirit to counteract this. [00:07:09] And we say yes, there's a very definite teaching and that is in the epistle to the Galatians. Outstandingly so, it just fits this type like a glove. The Galatian believers, they were really believers, no question at all about that. They loved the Lord Jesus Christ, they had been cleansed by his precious blood, they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. And then after running well, they came to a stop. And the reason was, they were listening to people who were saying, it's alright being a Christian. It's alright having Jesus Christ of Nazareth as your Savior and Lord. But connect the law with it, keep the law, get circumcised. Remember the law of Moses, don't forget the traditions of your fathers. [00:08:01] And this brought them to a halt. You see, they got the truth mixed up with wrong doctrine. And whenever that happens, you come to a full stop, you don't make any further progress. And when you come to a full stop, you go back, you come under different influences, you come under bondage. And this is exactly what Paul said to the Galatian believers. You're in bondage, you've come under the law again, you've given up your grace, you've fallen from it. You're no longer enjoying the liberty of the Christian position that you formerly had. And so, very carefully, he began to apply the different truths connected with the Holy Spirit to show them how they could regain this place of liberty and joy and blessing and life.

I believe, dear brethren, that the Galatian believers were experiencing all that this story tells of. [00:09:05] Death, spiritual death.

Debt, not fulfilling righteousness. And bondage, coming under the influence of others. And Paul's ministry concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and his work and the descent of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Holy Spirit was the great antidote to all this condition that had crept in. Now, while we see the truth of this in Galatia, we don't want to treat this as a historical matter and say, well, this happened long ago. We have to remember that we ourselves can come under this kind of thing. It's possible for spiritual death to come in in our lives. Stagnation.

Debt, if you like, in that we are not fulfilling righteousness before God according to the position that he has placed us in. [00:10:02] And, of course, bondage to elements that we should never be in bondage to. So, this is a word for us, as much as it was for the Galatian believers. Now, I want to apply these vessels that were filled up with oil to different features of Paul's teaching in the epistle to the Galatians. Because, remember, the first thing that the woman had to do was to pay off her debt. Get rid of her debt. Get rid, if you like, as far as we are concerned, of those unrighteous features that are hindering us in our path to salvation. Features that are hindering us in our pathway in testimony for God. Now, the great danger with the Galatian believers was that they were trying to be perfect in the flesh. They had begun in the spirit. No doubt at all about that. They had begun well. [00:11:01] As we said already, their conversion was real. Their connection with Christ was beyond all possible doubt. And the beginning was excellent, first class. And now, by being circumcised, and by listening to the Judaizing teachers, they were coming under the bondage of the law, and they were, in principle, seeking to be perfected in the flesh. And Paul says, that's the way for debt. That's how you accumulate debt. Because no man can be justified before God in the flesh.

And no man can please God in the flesh, only in the power of the spirit. So we want to think of the first few vessels that were spent by the woman to clear off this accumulation of debt. If we turn to the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, we'll find there Paul enumerating a list of features [00:12:05] that belong to the old man, the flesh. And they certainly don't help. They only create conditions of debt. Because every feature there is an unrighteous feature. It's certainly not pleasing to God. It's abominable in the sight of God. And, says the apostle, now, if you live in the flesh, if you express yourself in this way, you're certainly not living for God. So over against that, he says, the fruit of the spirit.

And he mentions nine different features, beautiful features, of the spirit of God. Now I believe that this is what is portrayed, I infigure, in this vessel of oil that is filled, here's the way to clear off the debt. Not to allow ourselves to be following a pathway that is dishonoring to God and that brings us into bondage. [00:13:04] Oh, what a wonderful list it is. Nine different features. I think we should read them in Galatians 5. It won't take us a minute. Galatians chapter five and verse 22.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.

There is no law. What delightful features to come to light in a believer. And it's all possible. And thank God it's expressed. Love, plenty of love amongst the people of God. [00:14:01] Plenty of joy, plenty of peace. Much evidence of long-suffering and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance. And every feature expressed there, as we see it amongst the people of God today, is the evidence of the spirit of God. Certainly not the flesh. Flesh can't produce features like that.

Impossible.

The features of the flesh are mentioned from verse 19 to 21. And what a horrible list it is. So then, I believe that one of those vessels filled up with this precious oil is indicative of the spirit, of the spirit, the fruit of the spirit that is expressed in our lives, that is so pleasurable to God, and cancels out and reduces all this feature of the flesh that is so easily expressed in us. It's the positive features, you see, that are coming to light, that are so pleasing to God. [00:15:01] Then Paul says, Now look, brethren, don't sow to the flesh. Don't make provision for it. If you sow to the flesh, you're bound to reap corruption. It's inevitable. If you sow beans in the garden, well, you expect to get beans, don't you? If you sow a particular seed in the garden, you expect the flower to come up that it portrays in the packet. If you plant potatoes, you expect potatoes to come up. This is the inevitable result, the result of creation, every seed after its kind. If we sow to the flesh, we'll, of the flesh, reap corruption. Ah, says the apostle, you sow to the spirit and you'll reap eternal life. This is the kind of thing that you want to sow to, the spirit.

This is the person you want to sow to and you'll reap eternal life. [00:16:01] Well, that's a very wonderful thing. Another pot, another vessel filled with oil. What a wonderful thing to contemplate that this is something of the resources of the spirit that is available for every Christian. All those wonderful resources available now for every believer and so as we sow to the spirit, we reap eternal life. Oh, you say, I thought you got eternal life as a possession when you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior. Well, the Bible says so and that's abundantly true. John says, I've written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life. Paul, he speaks about eternal life as something at the end and the end, eternal life. He says, lay hold of eternal life. How do you lay hold of a thing if you've already got it? Surely it means that you're to be in the positive enjoyment of it and that's another story. Plenty of persons today have life [00:17:03] but you couldn't say that they're in the enjoyment of life. Take a person who's lying in an oxygen tent absolutely paralyzed, unable to do a thing for himself, utterly dependent upon this machine to keep alive. He's living but is he in the enjoyment of it? And I believe this is true in connection with eternal life. Thank God through belief in Christ we can claim that we have eternal life, a present possession that can never be taken from us. Whether we're in the enjoyment of it is another story. And if we sow to the spirit we reap eternal life. That is, we enjoy eternal life as it ought to be enjoyed. I think we've got to remember these two things. John's ministry too that indicates beyond all possible doubt [00:18:01] that every believer in Christ has eternal life. They have it as a gift. But there's also much ministry that indicates it's another thing to enjoy eternal life, to be in the gain of it and to express it. And I believe this is what Paul's after when he says, sow to the spirit and then you'll reap eternal life. And so here is another vessel of oil that is being used so that we might live, live normally. This is normal living. The leading of the spirit, the walking in the spirit, the living in the spirit, the addressing the Father through the spirit, this is all living. You see, we've paid off the debt. We should keep in mind, of course, that objectively it was cancelled once and for all in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I'm now thinking of debt in the sense of living unrighteously [00:19:02] for God.

And that's possible for every Christian. And the way to cancel that out is by living positively in the power of the spirit of God. And then, how wonderful, dear believers, it is to realize that there is a power that enables us to lead a normal Christian life. All the corrective ministry that we find in the New Testament stems from the fact that Christians were living abnormally. It wasn't an abnormal it wasn't a normal Christian feature for a man to live as the man was living who is mentioned in the fifth chapter of 1 Corinthians. That certainly wasn't normal Christian life. It was an abomination. And when we find a man casting all out of the assembly's diatribes did in John's epistle that certainly wasn't

normal Christian living. And the Galatians they weren't living in a normal Christian way. [00:20:01] An abnormal way. So all the corrective ministry that comes in is to indicate that Christians are living abnormally, not normally. But if we are walking in the spirit, being led by the spirit, and worshipping in the spirit, praying in the spirit, this is all normal Christian life. And it's only the flesh and sin that intervenes to hinder us in this normal way. Now says Paul in the Galatians chapter 4 he says, I don't want you people to be living in bondage. Why all the Godhead was active in this great and wonderful operation to bring us out of bondage into liberty. And so he says, when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his son made of a woman born under the law. [00:21:02] And then when the work of the cross was accomplished, the spirit of God's son was shed abroad in our hearts so that we can call God Father, Abba, Father. The spirit of the son is in our hearts. Now, we're not bondmen, we're sons.

And not only are we sons, but we have the feeling of sons.

And so Paul says, I don't want you to be in bondage. Why should you bring yourself, allow yourself to be under these beggarly features of bondage?

Why not be in the enjoyment of the liberty and joy of sonship? That's what we want for you, he says. What a wonderful thing it is to be in this position. In order to do this, the son, co-equal with the father and the spirit, had to come into this world, accomplish the work of redemption, then after that [00:22:01] was accomplished, ascended back to his father, and the spirit was sent down into the hearts of the believers. Now you see, it's one thing to have the position of a son.

It's another thing to have the feeling of a son.

I could adopt a child into my family, adopt a boy into my family, and I can give him the position of a son. I can be kind to him, I can love him, I can bestow all the care that is necessary upon him, and yet, he might never have the feeling of a son towards me. He might know his position and might never feel that he has this affinity with me so that he can call me his father in reality and truth. But you see, God has not only given us the position of a son, he sent the spirit of his son into our hearts whereby we cry Abba Father. [00:23:01] This is the normal call of the believer. What a wonderful thing. So that we might have the proper feelings according to the position of sons, we get the spirit of his son into our hearts. And just as the son said to his father Father, Abba Father, so we too, having his spirit, say Abba Father. We have the spirit of the son in our hearts. Well that's a wonderful vessel of oil, is it not?

This indeed is now real living. All sense of bondage has gone forever. All sense of distance has gone forever. Here is a condition of joy and blessing that every believer enjoys.

I'm sure it's one of the happiest things that we have when we come together to remember our Lord Jesus Christ and having entered into the truth of his sorrow [00:24:01] and sufferings and death, to be with him in all the power and glory of his triumph and resurrection and led by him into the worship of his Father. What a wonderful thing. What a marvelous thing. I remember he said to Mary, I ascend to my Father to your Father, to my God and to your God. And so he brings us into his own place that he is one and secured the fruit of his suffering and his sorrow. And he brings us into that place that we might have it with him and enjoy it with him. And in that place we have the spirit of the son that we might have the true feelings that belong to this position and blessing. We often say dear brethren in connection with the preaching of the gospel, now don't rely on your feelings to the unconverted. And

I'm sure that's perfectly correct. They are not to rely upon their feelings in any way whatsoever. Oh, how we as Christians should yearn for true [00:25:01] and proper feelings produced by the spirit of God in relation to the Father and the Son. I'm sure that there are those right proper feelings that belong to us as believers in Christ.

Now this isn't sentiment. This isn't in any way emotion as we know according to nature. This is the fruit of the spirit of God that gives us the right feelings towards the Father and towards the Son. And without the spirit we cannot have them. They are spirit produced, spirit maintained and how wonderful they are.

Then we find Paul saying to the Galatian believers, now he says you've got to live in the spirit. Just you think of that dear woman in the house there.

She's got rid of all this pressure upon her.

She's no longer thinking about debt, no longer concerned about bondage. She knows that her sons are going to be with her. No threat of that [00:26:01] bondage now. Then she's going about the house and you can see her in a light-hearted way. She's performing the different duties of the day, baking, cleaning and all the other things that belong to a house. And she's quite happy in her spirit because all the load is gone.

Now if we transfer this to Christian living, we see ourselves in the power of the spirit, leading a Christian life without any sense of burdens weighing upon us because of the problems that face us. Although there are burdens, but now they are born in the power of the spirit of God. We have strength and courage. We have help and blessing and so we live in the spirit. And this is what Paul says, now live in the spirit and we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Then he also says we are led, led, led by the spirit. And that's a very wonderful thing. Guidance and control [00:27:02] and direction and help by the spirit of God himself. Perhaps we haven't given sufficient recognition to the power and service of the person of the Holy Spirit. It's quite an interesting thing and I just mention it in passing that in investigating the hymn books 1928 and 1903 we found in both of them that there were barely 50 references to the Holy Spirit in the hymns. Now in 1928 there are 436 hymns only 50 references to the Holy Spirit in 436 hymns. 1903 402 hymns and the same about 50 references. We feel that's rather lopsided because you can't go very far in the New Testament before you come across the person and work of the Holy Spirit. [00:28:01] Indeed there isn't a truth revealed in New Testament times but hasn't some reference to the power of the person of the Holy Spirit. So I believe this is a very important matter that we keep in mind there are infinite resources available for us as believers in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. I believe this little story in 2 Kings chapter 4 would give us some impression of this.

Oh let's keep it in mind that little pot of oil that under the miraculous power of the servant of God was transformed into an unlimitable resource so that the woman was blessed in such a wonderful way. Now we come to this other home. This is a tale of two homes and we find in the second one it's not a home of need. Ah no [00:29:01] it's a different kind of home. A wealthy woman I think it says a great woman Mr. Darby's translation tells us she was a wealthy woman. A woman without any need as far as wealth was concerned she had a husband she wasn't a widow she hadn't any sons that was rectified but this was a very happy home well ordered home. A home where there was care and where there was blessing for the things of God.

Now they see Elisha passing by and they invite him in come in and have a meal with us.

Elisha went in and had a meal and this continued for some time.

Then Shunammite said to her husband you know this man that we're giving a meal each day this is a holy man of God.

Ah there was discernment [00:30:01] in the eyes of God God's servant was there before them and she could see it.

Now she said let's go a little further than making a meal let's provide a little chamber for him we'll provide all that's necessary a bed a table a seat and a lamp and we'll make him comfortable and we'll look after him.

Now I'm not giving you an address on how to look after that was in this house.

How really concerned they were for the things of God. Well this went on for some time and Elisha says now is there anything that you need?

Can I speak to you before the king or the captain of the host? Well the woman says I'm not interested I'm amongst my own people I'm quite happy.

She says I'm among [00:31:01] my own people I'm here in the place where God wants me I'm just in the right place no there's nothing I want no favours from the king no favours from the captain of the host quite content with the lot that God has given to me.

So he speaks to Gehazi and Gehazi says now and he did he made the promise to the dear woman and she thought oh please please don't tell me lies he said now it's all right and the time came when she received the son. It wasn't long after the little boy had grown working in the fields with his head unprotected working under a blazing [00:32:01] sun and it does get very fierce in that part of the world the sun and the little boy is suffering from acute sun stroke and he dies.

Well the man of God is sent for and I want you to see this dear brethren because I think it's beautiful.

They had identified themselves with the Lord's servant.

Now in a moment of extremity and need he identifies himself with their need.

Isn't this the way that scripture works? Scripture informs us that love begets love. This is so with God's love to us and our love towards God. It's the same in the Christian circle love begets love and so we find the man of God he identifies himself with his boy's condition, stretches himself out [00:33:01] mouth to mouth, hands to hands and so on and then the little boy is raised to life and restored to his mother.

Well it's a beautiful picture.

First of all this matter of hospitality in the Christian home. They didn't know he was the man of God they were concerned but they saw he was someone who needed a meal. What a nice thing it is when

the Christian's home is given to hospitality. What joy and blessing there is.

Remember it's the man of God who is bringing this kind of thing to light.

It's the Lord's servant that is being used to have thinking about God preeminently in their lives.

This is the kind of thing that it [00:34:01] produces.

It expresses itself amongst the Lord's people.

And so they show Elisha hospitality. And then there came spiritual discernment. She said this man is a holy man of God. Oh how right it is that in our lives there are things that can draw out from each other this recognition that there is something in us that is of worth for God. How prone we are to peer into each other's lives and ways to try and see if we can find some fault in each other.

Something that well really makes much of our lives.

It is of spiritual worth.

Paul he experienced [00:35:01] this often.

He wrote a letter of commendation to a dear sister.

You find it in the beginning of Romans 16. And Phoebe was a woman like this. She was of real spiritual worth for the testimony.

I believe Phoebe was a real Shunamite.

She was really a person who wanted to help.

And this is what comes out particularly in this husband and wife. They wanted to help. And this real spiritual discernment was seen in them.

As was in Paul and oh dear brethren [00:36:01] ought to be seen in us too. This ability to recognize what is of spiritual worth in each other and commend it without any envy. That's what Elisha said. Isn't it? Verse 13. Behold thou has been careful for us with all this care. Well, let us examine the care and forget for a moment that it's connected with Elisha.

And let us think of these things in relation to ourselves.

What do they represent for us? I want you to think for a moment of Elisha, the kind of life that he led. He had thoroughly committed himself to [00:37:01] the things of God. He had left his father and his mother and his secular calling and he was prepared to endure the reproach and difficulties that were involved in following him. It does not seem to me that this is God's way of providing a recompense for his servant by this gracious provision through the Shunammite. Now, again, I say I want you to forget that it's connected with Elisha and think how it connects itself with us all because I trust we are all thoroughly committed to the things of God. Not necessarily given up our secular employment but nevertheless committed to the things of the Lord.

Our whole outlook is that we want above all else to promote the things of the Lord as we are left in this world.

The way we live in our homes, the outlook that we [00:38:01] have towards life, the whole bent of our life governed by this great principle, we want to promote the things of God. Now, you can be sure that as you set yourself for this, you will meet opposition and you'll meet reproach, you'll meet difficulty. It's inevitable. There will be opposition from within, the flesh, self. Oh, it hates to be kept down. It hates to be pushed aside and at every opportunity it will intrude. There will be opposition from the world.

That's inevitable.

Any persons who set themselves to represent God in this world will meet opposition and of course sometimes sad to say we meet it in the professing Christian circle. So it doesn't matter where the opposition comes from or the difficulty expresses itself.

We have to be prepared for it and make sure that these things are not going to hinder [00:39:01] us in our desire to please God.

And I believe that these things here is the way that God recompenses us and provides for us as we seek to be true to him. Now the little chamber, if I understand it, means a place of privacy, a place where we can be alone with God. Now I think this is one of the great essentials in the Christian life. And I think you will agree with me that in this modern age it's one of the most difficult things to obtain.

Privacy.

Just a little time to be alone with God. Oh, how necessary it is that we find time for prayer, to commit ourselves to God, to tell God the problems that face us, the resources that we require, and the many things that are involved in the pathway [00:40:01] of devotedness to God.

Well, Elisha had this little chamber.

He could go into it, shut the door, speak to God, have his prayer time, tell God all the things that were pressing upon his spirit.

You remember when the trade union of Daniel's day had issued a decree that meant that Daniel mustn't pray to his God? When he knew about their decision, he closed his door and inside his chamber opened his window and prayed to God. He had that little place of privacy where in he could speak to God about this very important matter.

I'm sure in the strength of that prayer he went into the den of lions and was blessed of God in such a wonderful way. Oh, it just cannot be replaced this. [00:41:01] It's a natural thing.

It's a natural thing.

It's an absolute necessity for every believer time alone with God.

Now it's built on a wall. Now the wall would indicate to us a place of safety, a place of separation.

You remember that Rehab, the harlot, her house was built upon the wall. She let down the scarlet cord from her house and when Joshua and his army surrounded the place and eventually brought it low, Rehab, she was saved and her family was saved all through her resource and energy.

Now I believe we have many instances of this in Scripture and remember, walls in Scripture aren't simply to keep out. [00:42:01] That's the negative side. Walls in Scripture are a source of protection.

Now, if you have a piece of ground and the ground is not fertile and it's filled with weed, you don't bother putting a fence up.

Dogs can come or anybody can come, doesn't matter. If you've got that ground nicely tilled and you've got some nice vegetables growing, some nice strawberries growing, you want that protected.

You want to see that everything is going to grow normally so that you'll gather the fruits in due time.

So you protect it.

It's not only to keep things out, it's to preserve what's inside.

And so we find in the book of Revelation that that [00:43:01] high wall, the true secret of real separation is to preserve what is real and precious and worthwhile.

This is the lesson that every Christian must learn.

And of course if we let the wall get broken down as it was in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra then it's a very sad condition.

So this little room that Elisha has is upon the wall, the place where things are preserved.

It's the place of rest. He has a bed there.

Now we're not thinking of literal rest, we know this very well, but we know how much we need to be kept at rest in our spirits, how easily we can become irritated, frustrated by the difficulties of the pathway, and so how good Peter, [00:44:01] Paul, and Peter and all those who served the Lord were very restful men in their spirits.

You remember that well-known incident when Peter was lying in prison and he was to be executed the next day and there he was lying in the prison sleeping.

I wonder, could we have slept with the threat of death?

But Peter wasn't an old man and the Lord had said to him, Peter, when you're an old man, that's when you'll die, said that in the end of the gospel by John.

When you're old, another will lead thee. This speaks he concerning the death by which he would glorify God. Now this is not my time yet.

[00:45:01] The Lord has indicated this to me.

When he wrote his second epistle, he did say to the saints, it's coming very near my time now. The Lord has shown me that it's time to put off this tabernacle.

Still restful, and I believe in all the circumstances of the world, and upset.

Then he had a table, and a stool, and a lamp. I suppose the table represents the great principle of fellowship, table of the Lord, the best possible expression we could find in scripture to indicate this. We have a meal, and others around it, and it is a great expression to us [00:46:01] of what fellowship means.

So, this table indicated that while Elisha was in this place of privacy, he also knew something about the reality and blessedness of fellowship. Whether we think in the figure of fellowship with the Father and the Son, we are faithful here in this hall to carry on the principles of the truth.

There would be no use me coming along to speak to just some forms in an empty hall, and this is what fellowship means.

Year by year, you carry on the principles of fellowship here and maintain a relationship with the Lord. And there's an affinity, something that we can enjoy, [00:47:01] enjoy the precious things of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there is a seat.

I suppose this is to make him comfortable in the enjoyment of the fellowship, comfortable too, in connection with the many things that he would do at that table.

That he provides everything that is necessary for us as we seek to serve him, and what a wonderful thing that is.

And if we think of this last thing, the light shining, oh, how wonderful it is to have this light.

Cardinal Newman, before he was a cardinal, I think it was 12 years before he went to the church.

Just about the same time, Mr.

Darby wrote his well-known hymn. Light divine surrounds thy [00:48:01] going.

God himself shall mark thy way.

Isn't there a difference?

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom.

Seems to give one the sense of it's getting murkier and murkier and murkier, and we need to see this divine light. There is no difference about being led by this wonderful light that is always shining.

Light divine surrounds thy going.

God himself shall mark thy way.

Oh, how wonderful.

And I feel, dear brethren, this is what we need to know more and more, the real enjoyment of divine guidance in our souls, and whether we be in private or in fellowship is divine light shining for our blessing and for our help. Well, I see the time is gone. We haven't time to [00:49:01] speak about the rest of the story.

Very wonderful one. I leave it for yourselves. The restoration of this little lad, what joy it would bring to the mother.

Perhaps she saw her hopes dashed and then I say how wonderful to identify ourselves with the difficulties and problems. How remote we can be from the problems that beset each other.

Is there a problem?

It's not our problem.

That's not Christianity, is it? We talk a lot about the principles of the body, and one of the great principles of the body is if one member suffers, we all suffer.

I believe Paul, Elisha, stretching out himself above that little boy and acting as he did, brought before us all this wonderful picture [00:50:01] of identification and then life flowing from it. Oh, that we might do this. Identify ourselves with each other, really, truly, spiritually, feelingly, in connection with our joys and sorrows.