

Women's Day Message

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[0 : 00] You know, I just love it how God details everything together because that's his business. That's one of the many things that he does.

And I just am in absolute awe of him. And I've been listening to him about what he wanted me to bring today.

And I feel, I really feel, thank you, I really feel quite pregnant with what he's given me and I can't wait to deliver it.

And today, ladies, we've come to a feast. We've come to a feast and we're here because actually we're all hungry. Because on a beautiful day like today, we wouldn't choose to come in and be in a building.

We'd be out there, but we're hungry for the more of God. And he is going to feed us today. We're going to feast on God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[1 : 04] And we're going to feast on his word. And the scripture for the day that the team gave me is, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path on this beautiful, beautiful banner.

In fact, they're all stunning, aren't they? But your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. And we're told in Song of Songs that he brings us to his banqueting table.

And that's what he's done today. And I look at, we're going to feast on his truth and faithfulness.

And I look at, I see it as like a buffet. And I love buffets because you can go and look and you think, oh.

And you take what you like, you take what's for you. And that's what's going to happen today. We're going to take what is for us. And I'm sure we've already received something that's for us.

But also, I sense that the Lord is going to give us something that he knows that we need, but we didn't realize. And during this feast, we're going to be reset, restarted, and refocused.

[2 : 13] And Psalm 119, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I'm going to be sharing what the word of God does in us, for us, and through us.

The word imparts God's love, his light, his life, his power, his freedom, and so much more. And I'm going to be quoting from either the Amplified or the Passion Translation.

And if some of you haven't heard of the Passion Translation, it's actually a translation from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. I love it. Now, listen, I'm going to read from Psalm 119.

And I want you to listen as if it's you saying these words and actually receiving them. Truth's shining light guides me in my choices and decisions.

The revelation of your word makes my pathway clear. To live my life by your righteous rules has been my holy and lifelong commitment.

[3 : 26] Then a bit further on, it says, I'm bruised and broken, overwhelmed by it all. Breathe life into me again by your living word.

Everything you speak to me is like joyous treasure, filling my life with gladness. And I'm going to share something now, which my friends that are here have heard it numerous times before.

And sometimes when I share it, they'll say, and you've already told us that. But, you know, I make no excuse because I know a lot of you haven't heard it. But before lockdown, about a year before lockdown, we had a new downstairs loo fitted.

We live in an ordinary run-of-the-mill, three-bedroomed semi. But thankfully, it has a downstairs loo. And it's a double blessing for me because, as you can tell, I'm a northerner.

And I was brought up in a two-up, two-down house with no running hot water and a toilet at the bottom of the backyard. Actually, we used to call it the lavatory. And so having a new downstairs loo, as I said, was a double blessing for me.

[4 : 39] And as part of this, we had a piece of, an L-shaped piece of granite, which ran alongside the wash basin and the back of the loo. And it wasn't the granite that sort of looks like granite, but really it's plastic.

This was proper rock-hard granite. And when the plumber had fitted it, I noticed that there was a flaw in this granite. It was not very big.

It was perhaps nearly as big as my little fingernail. But it was rough and it was very indented. And I was not particularly happy. And then a friend came and looked at it. And she's got this kind of granite in her kitchen.

And she said, actually, it's part of the makeup of the granite. Like you get a knot in a piece of wood, this is part of the makeup in the granite. So I had to decide not to let this flaw rob me of my joy. And it wasn't in a place where you could have put a soap dish. You couldn't hide it. It was there. So about two months later, my husband, I'm smiling when I say this, he got round to putting a picture back up on the wall in the downstairs loo.

[5 : 48] And it was one of the Hannah Dunnett ones where she does artwork and she writes scriptures in it. And it's called The God of All Comfort. Come to me, oh, you are weary and heavy laden.

And he put that up. And a bit, a short while later, I went to the loo and that flaw had gone. It had gone. It had completely disappeared.

And if I walked into that loo a hundred times that evening, I must have just kept going in and rubbing my finger over it. And the morning after, I got up and I was having my time with the Lord.

And I was, you know, I'm still blown away, to be honest. And it's all those years ago. But, and I said, Lord, I don't, I don't get this. You've, I didn't, you, I didn't ask you to heal it, to make it whole, to restore it.

I wouldn't, but you've, you've done it. And, and he very clearly said to me, when my word is lifted up, which it was, his word was physically lifted up in the picture.

[6 : 48] When my word is lifted up, then I will do miracles. When my word is lifted up, then I will do miracles. And today, we're going to lift up the word of God.

And miracles are going to happen. John 6, 35 and Jeremiah 15, 16. Jesus is the bread of life.

Your words were found and I ate them. And your words to me were a joy and the rejoicing of my heart. And we need to remember that actually Jesus is the word of God.

It says, in the beginning was the word. And the word was God. And the word was with God. And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth.

That's our Jesus. And we feed on God's word because it nourishes us. It nurtures us. It cleanses us. It refreshes us.

[7 : 45] It renews us. It comforts us. It sustains us. It supports us. Guides us. Gives us wisdom. Refreshes and restores our souls.

And our souls are our minds, our wills and our emotions. The word of God is our source of life. But he's wrapped up with his word.

It's our source of life. And we can become spiritually depleted and weak if we don't feed on his word. And we end up living life in our own strength, using our own wisdom, which results in us being exhausted, making wrong choices, and sadly becoming prey for the enemy.

But how do we feed on God's word? We read it. Now, I know some of us aren't avid readers, but we can listen to it.

But, you know, I really sense that if we ask God to give us that desire to read his word where we find him, where he is, he will give us that desire. And what might start off as a discipline actually will become a delight.

[8 : 53] But also, we can meditate on the word of God. We can memorize, believe, pray, speak, sing the word of God. And we can praise and worship with the word of God, which is what we've been doing this morning.

And we're just going to look at meditating on his word. And meditate means to think about, to contemplate, to go over and over in our minds.

It's like what cows do when they chew the cud. And it's called, that is called rumination. They swallow, unswallow, re-chew, and re-swallow their food.

And apparently, they spend about eight hours a day chewing the cud, which is about 30,000 chews a day. I googled that.

And, of course, we didn't really need to know it. But I thought it was really interesting. So when we meditate on God's word, thinking about it, turning it over and over in our minds, we get into his word, and his word gets into us.

[9 : 59] We get into his word, and his word gets into us. Now, I just mentioned that we've got an enemy. But he is an enemy that was defeated through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So now the only power that he has is what we allow him, if we leave an open door, as it were. And Scrooge says that we ought to be alert, because we have an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for who he can devour.

But, another but, when we submit to him, we have the power and authority of God Almighty to resist him. And, you know, he's got to do then. He's got to flee, because he's terrified.

One of the names of the enemy is the father of lies. He's a liar, and he is a deceiver. And he tries to implant, he tries to implant his lies into our minds and hearts.

And he never gives up. But, you know, he cannot remain where there's no agreement with his lies. We were created to live in awe of God, not in fear of the enemy.

[11 : 17] And let's remember that God has given us the power and the authority to overcome. And two of my favourite scriptures, Colossians 3.3 and Acts 17.28, our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

Our lives are hidden with Christ in God. And it's in him, in him, that we live and move, have our being, our existence, our identity.

And when we know what the word of God says, we can take every thought captive. It's like putting a lasso around it. We can take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ, his word, the truth.

Because the word of God is living and active. Hebrews 4.12. It's very powerful. It does stuff. Good stuff. Powerful stuff.

God's word has authority and power. Isaiah 55.10. The word that I speak doesn't return to me unfulfilled. My word performs my purpose and fulfills a mission I sent it out to accomplish.

[12 : 36] So if we let the word of God have its home in our heart and in our minds, Colossians 3.16, it will give us insight. It will give us wisdom, peace, enable us and enable us to see people, situations, certain circumstances from his perspective.

And that's so important and actually very helpful. And his word is a weapon of victory. As we read and meditate on his word, it means we're meditating on truth and not meditating on our problems. And it's so easy to do that. So easy to meditate on our problems and in a sense, nurse them. But because no matter how we feel, how out of control things around us may feel and things in the world are, the promises of God are true and powerful and actually are very comforting and very strengthening.

Psalms 138.3. At the very moment I called out to you, Lord, you answered me. You strengthened me deep within my soul.

Our minds, our wills, our emotions. He strengthened us in our minds. He strengthens our wills. He strengthens our emotions. You strengthened me deep within my soul.

[14 : 02] And you breathed fresh courage into me. God's word breathes his life into us and brings us healing and freedom.

And as we read the word, walk it out and live in the principles that lead to the promises. Now, oh, I thought I brought my other water.

I'll open this. Oh, thank you, Mandy. She's so lovely, isn't she? Let's face it. On this journey of life, we get hurt.

We get wounded. We get betrayed. We get disappointed. Life happens. And there's a lot of times when life, well, it just doesn't seem fair.

We have debris. We have clutter. We have rubbish and baggage in our lives. Whatever that looks like, it's different for each one of us. And because we're ladies together, I can share what I'm going to share now.

[15 : 06] But when I share it, listen carefully. I do not want you to focus on me. I want you to focus on the redemption of God.

When I was a very, very little girl, I was sexually abused. Now, this was not my parents. I need to say that because, you know, the word of God says, honor your parents and it will go well with you.

So I do honor my mom and dad. They did the best they could. They did the best they could. My dad was alcoholic and he died when he was 50. I was raped when I was 15.

I got married when I was 18 and very quickly became pregnant when they found out that I had tuberculosis, pulmonary tuberculosis in the lungs.

And they said, we've never come across this before. We've never come across tuberculosis in a pregnant woman. I was 18 turning 19 at the time.

[16:07] We suggest that you have an abortion because we don't know if you or the baby will survive. And I refused. And I lived. And the baby is now 52 this month.

And the man I was married to at the time, she's called Lisa, when Lisa was nine months old, he went off with another girl who had a baby by somebody else.

At 24, I remarried. And I very soon became a Christian, but my husband didn't. And after 10 years, I found out that he was having an affair with the girl who was head of PE at the school where I worked in the office.

And he actually did marry her. In fairness, he did marry her. But he'd said that in the 10 years we'd been married, he'd never loved me. And that was why he didn't want children with me.

So at 34, I was getting married for the third time. And I married John. We'd been married for 37 years.

[17:16] And John was a widower with three children under six. They were six, four, and 15 months at the time. And his wife had committed suicide by jumping out of a window at a hospital.

So there you can see, ladies, that God is in the business of redeeming. He's in the business of restoring. And he heals. And if you were to ask me about one attribute of God, I would say I have known and experienced and still do his faithfulness to me and our family.

And he changed my life. He picked me up. And he put me on the right path. Because Jesus paid the price for freedom in every area of our lives.

Our past, our present, our now, and our future. That's freedom from regret of the past and faith for now and faith for the future.

Because we don't know what the future holds, but he does. And those things that trigger us, strongholds and hindrances to our closeness, our intimacy with Father. Jesus took the lot when he died on the cross.

[18:28] He exchanged darkness for his light. And he has removed every single obstacle that would seek to come between us and God. The Lord loves each one of us unconditionally.

He sees us. He understands us. He absolutely gets us. He holds our lives so tenderly, so powerfully, so wisely, so graciously, and so, so mercifully.

As I've just mentioned, our souls may feel battered and bruised at times, but God's word heals and transforms us by the renewing of our minds.

And how our minds need renewing. The word of God teaches us the right way to think and the right way to understand. And it's also good for us to learn how to rest in his presence.

To rest in his arms of grace. And to lean into the confidence of his faithfulness and to trust his character. And a while ago now, I was going through whatever it was I was going through.

[19:42] And I said to the Lord, Lord, I'm just going to lean on you. And he said, I need you to do more than that. I'm going, I want you to lean into me.

And he gave me a picture. And it was a brilliant, pure, white, light substance. And it was a bit like soft, like marshmallow.

And I couldn't see the top, the bottom, or the sides of it. And I went up to it. And I just very gently gave my all, all my weight into this substance.

It was the presence of God. And he just came round me and took me in and cocooned me. And it was so very, very precious and so very soothing.

And at the same time, so very, very powerful. I always call it my marshmallow experience. See, we can know his peace. We can know his rest.

[20:39] We can know his very presence in the middle of any storm. His peace is powerful, restorative, and restful. His peace that guards our hearts and guards our minds in Christ Jesus.

And he says, come to me. Come to him, all you who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest. And, you know, I had to put this into practice about, well, it's a year ago this month.

And, excuse me, my lips are sticking to my false teeth. I had to put his resting in him.

I mean, we've always got to put resting in him every day, every minute. But in particular, it's a year ago this month. And Lisa, the baby who I had when I was 19, she was diagnosed with cancer. She lives two and a half hours away in Shrewsbury. And it's a type of cancer that can come back. So she had 12 weeks of chemo, radiotherapy, these infusions.

[21 : 49] And she's still in the middle of having these 50 Herceptin injections. But, you know, she's done really well, exceptionally well. And she actually went back to school last month.

She's a head teacher. And, but for me, I couldn't see her. It wasn't as though I could walk further down the other part of the village and wave through the window to her.

But I just had that peace, that peace, that powerful peace, that comforting peace that just guarded my heart and guarded my mind in Christ Jesus.

And one, again, one of my favorite scriptures is Isaiah 26.3. He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusts in thee.

And in the amplified. And I'm going to use her. He will keep her in perfect peace whose mind is steadfast, fixed, committed and focused on him.

[22 : 50] Because she trusts and takes refuge in him with hope and confident expectation. I love that. Confident expectation.

You know, ladies, for each and every single one of us, there is a permanent yes in the heart of God towards us. The God who meets us in our places of pain and our places of pleasure.

The Lord is our saviour, our rescuer, our shield, our shelter, our comforter, our provider and our defender, our advocate, our friend, our father.

And there's also a part of him that I need in particular to recognise. And I do see it as having the mother heart of God.

Jesus longs to love us back to life. His love is unconditional, relentless, ferocious, incessant, persistent and powerful.

[23 : 56] And yet at the same time, his love is gentle, cherishing, soothing and gracious. He's never, ever going to let us down.

He's never going to leave us. He's never going to forget us. He's never going to abandon us. His eye is always upon us. And his heart is always towards us.

He longs to love us back to life. But we have to let him. We have to allow him. We need to let him into those hidden areas.

We have to choose to let the power of his truth touch our hearts and awaken our faith that may be sleeping. And we're to let his truth transform our lives.

We need to be willing. Our will being part of our soul. We have to choose to allow him to let him in. And then he gives us that higher perspective, a different perspective.

[24 : 57] His perspective that opens up our understanding and brings clarity to confusion. Because God is not the author of confusion. In 1 Samuel 10, 22, it says, Samuel went to present Israel's first king to the people.

And Saul was discovered hiding among the baggage. Now, in the King James, now this is probably my sense of humor.

None of you probably laugh. But this made me laugh. Because in the King James, it says, Behold. I mean, that's so King James, isn't it? Behold. He had hid himself amongst the stuff.

So, we're now going to be shown a clip. It's from The Greatest Showman.

And actually, the clip itself, you could just give a whole message on the clip. But thank you, guys. I don't need to do this.

[26 : 10] She says, Keola, settle. She says, I'm not a stranger to the dark. Hide away, they say. We don't want your broken parts.

I've learned to be ashamed of all my scars. Run away, they say. No one will love you as you are. But I am brave.

I am bruised. I am whom I'm meant to be. This is me. And I love watching that clip. I've watched it so many times. And there's a point where I see that she, this is why we've got this here, she comes out from behind.

And she steps into what God has got for her. And it's as if she gets that revelation of who she is in God and what she has in God.

And, you know, she says it felt otherworldly. It was. It was God. And you see, some of us, like Saul, was hiding in the baggage. There are many of us who knowingly or unknowingly are hiding

amongst, hiding behind stuff, behind baggage that will prevent us from moving into what the Lord has already anointed and appointed us to do.

[27 : 29] And we're actually hiding from his calling on our lives. We're hiding from living in his fullness. But, you know, he's got the answer. And this is because we can be in a type of prison and either the door is open and we're not seeing it or we've actually locked ourselves in and we're hiding for whatever reason.

But he's calling us to walk through the open door of that prison and let him be real within us. Let him deal with the baggage. And it can be the baggage of, and this is not a comprehensive list at all, but it can be the baggage of unforgiveness.

And I'll just say one thing on unforgiveness because that's a whole message. But unforgiveness is not a feeling. It's not a feeling. It's a choice. It's an act of the will.

And the only person who suffers if we don't forgive is us. So there's unforgiveness we might be hiding behind. Bitterness, resentment, offence, shame, guilt, lack of confidence, negative words spoken to us or over us or against us, lack of self-worth, self-pity, self-preservation, self-sufficiency, comparison with others, which is a trap.

Comparison with others. Regret, fear, anxiety, unbelief, hurt, deception, unmet expectations. And actually, do you know what?

[29 : 00] Some of us need to stop saying the word sorry. We're to come from behind. Come from behind the music stand, whatever that music stand is.

Let God be God in you, for you, and through you. Be who he created you to be and do what he created you to do with what he's given you.

In your own uniqueness and your own specialness, we're all different. Let God love you. Allow him to impart his life to you.

Let's learn to live in our own anointing and uniqueness and enjoy it and come out from behind and say, this is me, this is me.

Song of Songs, 213. Arise, my love, my beautiful companion. That's each one of us. And run with me to the higher place, for now is the time to arise and come away with me.

[30 : 08] The Lord longs to be our number one. He longs to be number one above everything else in our lives and everyone. It's about surrendering to him, yielding to him, giving him our all, our everything.

And it's spending time with him, just hanging out with him, leaning into that marshmallow substance and resting with him, getting to know him, reading his word. The Lord longs for us to live in a place of peace and joy and to live with his sense of purpose for each one of us.

The word of God is an access point into the presence of God. And when we read his word, because like we said, he is the word, we can come into the sanctuary of his presence and let the breath of his word fill us.

Every scripture has the breath of God in it and it's balm for our souls. We apply it like ointment. And let's remember as well, ladies, to be grateful.

Let's be thankful for the little things and the overlooked things. Let's live in truth-filled grace and grace-wrapped truth.

[31 : 20] Let's live in truth-filled grace and grace-wrapped truth. Because his divine power has given us every single thing that we need for life and for godliness.

That's 2 Peter 1, 3, 4. We need to remind ourselves that nothing, absolutely nothing, comes as a shock or a surprise to God.

So consequently, he's already made provision for it. Let's fall in love with Jesus, the word of God. The one whose love fills in the cracks of disappointment and lifts the hanging head of heartbreak and fills our dry and we replaces with the living waters of refreshing.

He longs to take us deeper and higher and show us more and more of his love, his grace and his mercy. God always has more.

Always. He's the one who knows us best and loves us most. And I'm just going to finish by reading some of the things that we find, some of the truths that we find in God's word.

[32 : 33] Comfort and strength. Love and faith. Peace and joy. Hope and trust. Grace and mercy.

Clarity and direction. Security and stability. Fruitfulness and purpose. Confidence and courage. Healing and wholeness.

Wisdom and knowledge. Encouragement and provision. Forgiveness and redemption. Loving kindness and justice.
Deliverance and freedom. Contentment and rest. Renewal and restoration. Life and fulfillment.
Amen.
Amen. Amen.