

# Where You Can Find God's Overflow - A Key to Spiritual Freshness

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[0:00] Today, consider the church and how it has been under threat. All through history we see the church of God has been through much testing and trial, tribulation, all through history.

As a backdrop to my message today, I want to share some clips that I've put together to illustrate this. There's a doco that's currently under development called The Essential Church. And I have some clips from a trailer from that doco.

It relates to how the US government took aim at the church pastored by John MacArthur. Now I'm not endorsing that ministry necessarily, it's just an illustration. Some other churches are mentioned. And this all happened only a couple of years back. And I've pulled together some other example clips of other churches that have been impacted by heavy handed government at the time. And the government took some severe action against different pastors and churches. And then I'm going to finish up with a clip with an Aussie church example here in Melbourne. Some churches have been threatened with severe action and penalties.

[1:01] So we just run that video now. Some churches have been threatened with severe action against the church.

By meeting, we're testifying the government has no jurisdiction here. I was arrested and driven to a maximum security prison. The government has obviously turned up the heat on churches. Hi, Daddy. Hi. When the churches fall silent, the only religion left is the state. We needed to make a biblical statement because we always put ourselves under the authority of the word of God. L.A. County threatened Pastor John MacArthur with jail time and arrest. This wasn't about health and safety. This was all about control and opposition to religious freedom. As the government gets more corrupt and more corrupt. Snitches get rewards. Its totalitarian control has to increase. We have to have a mask on.

[2:09] And as they shut down any attacks against them. This is not about freedom or personal choice. The last thing standing is going to be the church.

We have the right to assemble before God. Not only do we have a constitutional right, we have a biblical command. Government cannot take away our freedom.

You cannot take our right to assemble. I'm not threatening at all today. But I'm going to tell you this. All the more, we are not closing down this church.

The question is, do I obey God or do I obey man? And so I've chosen today to open up church and to keep my doors open, my church doors open to the people in obedience unto God.

Well look, my conviction is always the word of God. And I believe there comes a time when we do need to draw a line in the sand. We need to make a choice. Are we going to please God or are we going to please man?

[3:12] And today I'm making that choice. The church can't be shut down. You know, because there's so many sick, hurting people out there. Church needs to be open for them. So I'm here.

I want to pray for people, you know, that come and help them through all what they're going through. I've got all respect for the police and everybody else. But when there's a tyrannical socialist communist regime in power, I will not bow.

I will not conform to this. I will only bow to the feet of Jesus Christ. He's my Lord and Saviour. He's the way, the truth and the life. It's my faith and if I have to suffer ramifications for practicing that, then so be it.

So why did you come here tonight? I will worship the creator of the universe, which I've done for 60 years, every once a week for 60 years. So I'm not going to stop now.

Of course, we know the time of the shutdowns that we've gone through in the past have been very severe. And we're not in that state now, but I think it'd be good for us to remember what was happening.

[4:15] Some churches had, as I say, very severe action and penalties. And it's interesting since all of that time, I've read that church attendance is 85% what it was pre-COVID.

So there's a lot of people have stopped going to church. A lot of people have dropped out of church. And the point that those videos are making, you know, don't endorse necessarily all of those that present it. I think the North Valley Baptist Church is a good one.

But the point that I want to make is that church is essential. Church is essential. And we need the church. We need the church. And our world needs the church. As the example there of the lady saying, you know, it's an opportunity for us to reach out, to talk to people.

It's an opportunity for the message, the gospel to go out to the world, isn't it? Church is essential. Our fellowship is essential. And in the face of any attacks against the church, we need to be fearless and bold.

We need to stand for the Lord and not be afraid to stand for our godly duty to assemble, to fellowship, to worship, to gather together under the sound of the gospel and to be the church.

[5:18] So that's just some introductory thoughts. And we can't know the blessings of brotherly fellowship if we miss that, if we miss the church. God's design is that we be together.

We be the church. It's right through the word of God, isn't it? And we should count that important, important, important enough that we are prepared to be persecuted and penalized for standing together as the church.

So I'd urge you to this, to that greater appreciation of the church. That's what we're here for today. It's a blessing. We didn't have that in some months past, did we? There was a constraint on us.

But while we can, while we don't have those constraints, let's seize those opportunities to fellowship. And the importance of the church, we should appreciate that in a world that cares little for such things, for such truth.

The world cares little for the church and would lock it down and shut it down. Some Christians seem to care little for the church as well. They don't support their church by attending or contributing. They show a carelessness about their church engagement.

[6:20] It's as if church is not something they value. Perhaps they would not even miss it if it were gone. So I urge you in that vein to think of the importance of the church.

And it's a fact that some churches are closing down. Maybe not so good ones necessarily, but one of the main churches in our local area has shut its doors. The Playford Anglican Church.

It's dwindled and they shut the doors. They're selling the building. It's one of the main church complexes in Elizabeth, is shutting down. And some churches are just limping along, barely able to sustain the numbers.

Hardly anyone attending. For example, the local Salvation Army. It's got hardly anyone going to it. So it seems like some believers are not faithfully attending their church. And the devil would do his utmost to distract us from fellowship.

With other loves, other interests. I'm sure we can all find other things to do on a Sunday morning or a Sunday night. Some of you might have knocked back opportunity for work at a higher rate of overtime.

[7:20] You know, let's make church a priority because it is important. It's important to God and it should be important to us. And the enemy will either close the church where he can, by strong arm tactics, by a socialistic, God-hating kind of government, or simply through that contagion of apathy.

Apathy among the people of God. Where they just, oh, I can't be bothered. That kind of attitude. So I'd urge you today of the value of the church. It's something that's precious.

It's something that's important, vitally important for every one of us. For our children, our families, and for our world that needs Christ. The church matters. Fellowship matters. So the word of God urges to that, to fellowship.

So we're going to go to the slides just now. As we look at a scripture that really puts it in a nutshell. I'd like to say it's one of the biggest sources of blessing for us as a believer.

That truth of fellowship. And of how we are to abound. How we can be blessed. How we can know spiritual life and power. And there's three short verses we're going to cover today.

[8:28] That I'll put to you, hold the secrets for your living a powerful and effective Christian life. I firmly believe that the devil wants to take you out of fellowship. It's one sure way that he uses to diminish your spiritual effectiveness.

Psalm 133. It's a very familiar passage, I'm sure, to some. And it really captures it in a nutshell. Three short verses that really put it all in a real nutshell of fellowship.

And why it's a blessing. Why it's a blessing for us. So Psalm 133 from verse 1 it says, Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Verse 2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.

As the Jew of Hermon and as the Jew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. So it's Psalm 133.

[9:45] It's a song of David. It's a song of David. And he says, Behold, behold, look at this, marvel at this. David tells where to find blessing. He sings it out.

He says, this is something joyful, something good. Where do you find blessing? When do we get a blessing? Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

So there's blessing here. It's when we get together. It's where the family of God gets together.

There's the uniting together of God's people. Brothers and sisters. The children of God. The people of God.

And this unity, it's not a pretend unity that's created by getting together and compromising with one another. Some have said, for example, you can tie two cats together by the tail.

That's not the unity that we're talking about. It's a unity of like-minded believers, isn't it? It's the unity of God's people who share that faith. It's where there's a God-glorifying kind of unity.

[10:45] And we should cherish that. That's something pleasant and a joy. And this word pleasant has the sense that it's something beautiful and lovely. It's something sweet, delightful. And God's in it.

The blessing of togetherness. It's interesting. This word, where it says, behold how good and how pleasant. It's interesting. The word pleasant has got the sense of, in the Hebrew, it's got that harmony of music.

It's like sweet music to our ears. That's the sense where brotherly fellowship is pleasant. It's like a music to our ears. And in this fractured world, we find a sweet fellowship.

We can know a sweet fellowship. And this unity that it speaks of in Psalm 133, it speaks of being together. It's being one. There's a blessing here. There's a blessing here this morning amongst you as we gather together, isn't it?

There's a blessing as brothers and sisters. And we think of the blessings of God, the wonderful blessings. We can't number them, the blessings of God. And the enemy would bring a cursing and confusion and disorder.

[11:48] There's blessing. It's like an orchestra playing sweet music to our ears. And here we are, some good folk here, just enjoying the blessings of togetherness. It's when brothers and sisters, well, together.

And God is relational, isn't he? God is relational. We need relationships. And as we come together, there's a fellowship. There's relationships that we grow together. And so if you're new amongst us, we hope you can join the family, as it were, that you'll feel there's a togetherness here.

As we love the Lord together, there's a fulfillment found in the assembling of God's people together. It's the church. And we know that as we join together, we get it together. We have to work together,

pray together, praise together, worship together.

And when we do, we can comfort one another. We can encourage one another. We can build up one another. We can love one another. There's something special when God's people get together. And you can't do that if you're not here.

So there's a joy there of community, of union, as we honor and glorify our God together. There's a blessed oneness. And we need one another to be the church. It's God's design.

[12:55] We see our Lord's building his church. It's something that he counts as very important. And it's interesting when our Lord prayed for the church to come, he prayed that his people would be one. There'd be a oneness there, a uniting.

And when we get together, there's a lifting up of our voices in common worship. In that worship, there's that heart of God for us to be praising him together.

And we can put aside all that would hinder and divide, all that would distract, and have that one heart, that heart of praise unto our God. So even more telling is that such a blessed fellowship, I put to you, it's even more especially important as we approach the return of our Lord.

I urge you today as we think about it, as we get closer and closer to the coming of our Lord, fellowship is all the more sweeter and all the more important.

As it reads in Hebrews 10, 25, it tells us, exhorts us, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another.

[14:00] And so much the more, as you see, the day, the day of the Lord approaching. So the day of the Lord is coming. And we know we've had some messages with themes of end times of late, and it should all the more stir us to fellowship.

We should want all the more to fellowship. We should want all the more to assemble ourselves together because we've seen the day approaching. We need that encouragement, that mutual support and encouragement and building up of one another because Christ is coming.

And David presents two powerful pictures in this psalm, two powerful pictures about unity. Living together in unity, he says, is like the oil poured upon Aaron's head.

And living together in unity is also like the dew of Hermon falling upon Mount Zion. Now notice of these two pictures, the oil poured out on Aaron's head, dripping down his beard, his garments.

And then the dew of Hermon is coming down. It all comes down from above, doesn't it? It all comes down. There's a downward movement in both of those pictures of the church.

[15:13] Both of these images, the blessing of God, it comes from above, doesn't it? It's a heavenly blessing. He pours it out. He pours it down upon us. The blessings come down and the praise goes up. Praise goes up, as the old song goes.

Amen. The blessings come down and the praise goes up. And so the source of this blessed unity is our Lord, isn't it? It's by God's grace that we have blessing.

God's blessing, God's refreshing and reviving. And it's bestowed on us, it's not contrived. We might do our part to work up some kind of unity of men, working up by men, but that's not going to work.

It's got to be sent down by God. Of course, otherwise we end up like the Tower of Babel, don't we? They were united, but they had the wrong purpose. It wasn't God's will that they unite to build some government tower to unify and build a tower to the skies.

It was God's will that they spread out. But they did the opposite of what God wanted them to do. So the uniting that we want is a uniting that's in God's will, as to His praise.

[16:19] So David shows us just what unity looks like. David tells us first how this godly unity is like the precious ointment, this precious anointing oil that was poured out on the head of the high priest.

So we read again there, verse 2. It says, It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.

Can you imagine what it would have been like as Moses poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head? And it says that it wasn't held back. It was poured out.

It was fulsome. It was excessive, really. And it tells us of the fellowship that there's an anointing when we fellowship.

Amen. God's outpouring when we fellowship. We see that through the Church of God, through Acts. When the people got together, God poured out. Amen. God poured out His anointing.

[17:19] And notice it says of this precious ointment, it says it was something precious. The anointing of God, the heaven sent blessing and outpouring of God is something that's precious.

David says it is like precious oil. And this word translated precious is the same word that's translated good. How good it is. It's a precious thing.

It's a blessed thing. It's an excellent thing. It's beneficial. It's good. It's good for you. It's good in God's sight. And He approves of it. So it's precious. When we fellowship, that brotherly uniting together is something that's precious.

And we should value it. So the question we could consider is do we truly value the opportunity to fellowship? You know, harking back to those little video clips we saw before.

Do we value church such that we're going to protest if they try to shut us down or try to lock the doors on us? You know, some churches were physically barred from entering their premises and the pastors and people were threatened with fines and imprisonment for daring to fellowship, for daring to get together.

[18:33] Would we have an uproar about that? Would we have an uproar about that? Or would we just kind of go along with it and think that's an okay kind of thing and not make a fuss about it? Fellowship is precious.

There's a value there. We should value it, people. Think of countries like North Korea. They don't have the opportunity to get together like we've got right now, have they? There's no opportunity for them.

They've got to meet secretly. They've got to meet discreetly, quietly in homes, undercover, undercover of darkness, at the risk of their lives. If they were to be heard singing or to have a Bible in their possession, they would face great penalty, even death.

So let's value the fellowship we can have. And think back to those times of lockdown of other countries where church is actually banned. It's illegal.

We've got such a blessing. We take it for granted. Here's something to be desired. It's precious. And it's something we should long for. God's unction is here. God's unction is on it. God's outpouring is on it.

[19:38] And we should long for it. Notice through the Word of God that it's when God's people got together, there was an outpouring. It's when God's people prayed. It's when God's people fellowshiped.

It's when there was that brotherly love that God poured out. God's outpouring happens. And so we see in Aaron's day, he was the great high priest and Moses poured out the oil.

And the oil was used to anoint Aaron for this office. The oil was used to set apart the priests for the service of God. Moses poured it out on Aaron.

And there's a couple of verses that tell us about that in Exodus 29 verse 7. It reads, Then shalt thou take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head and anoint him.

It's talking about Aaron. Moses was to pour out the anointing oil over Aaron's head. And then it was flowing down upon the beard and over his garments. And in the Old Testament, God used the act of anointing with oil to signify the setting apart of certain people for divine service.

[20:47] The oil sanctified that person for holy use. So Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments and upon his sons and upon his sons garments with him.

And sanctified Aaron and his sons and his sons garments with him. So pouring oil on Aaron and his descendants marked them as a holy people, as consecrated unto God.

The blessing of God's anointing is here when we fellowship. There's an unction upon us. And there's an equipping for his service. And all of these dimensions happen when we get together, even in our day and time.

It's the same God is working in us, through us, upon us as we gather in obedience to fellowship, to be his church. And when we think of Aaron, Aaron was very significant because he was the very first high priest.

And because every priest had to be descended from him. Ministry happens when we gather. God's dealing with us. His spirit is working, ministering to us as his word is working as it's open unto us. [21:58] And the priest provided that way for sin to be atoned for. The way for forgiveness and entry into God's presence. We have those same elements today. Fulfilled in Christ.

And we see that oil. It was a symbol of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It was a sign of God's blessing. So think of that too. It's every time we gather. Every time we get together. God's spirit is here empowering us to do his will and his work. There's a purpose for us. And the word tells us of a unity of the spirit. We read in Ephesians 4 verse 3. Paul tells them endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. So the spirit of God is working. Sometimes we don't always conceive of that or fully realise that. He's at work. And what is his work? The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. It's to lift up Jesus. That's how we know when it's real. The Holy Spirit doesn't manufacture some attention to himself.

[23:00] He puts the spotlight on Jesus. He lifts up the name of Jesus. He exalts the work of Jesus. The cross of Jesus. The grace of Jesus. That's how we know it's real.

And his anointing, the Holy Spirit's anointing, gives to us God's wisdom, his discernment and power. And the precious oil pictures that. It poured upon the head. It pictures in those days and times, it was a picture of hospitality. When a guest came to receive, to refresh the guest, they would pour oil or offer oil.

As it says in Luke 7, 46, it tells how the generous host would provide oil for a guest. As part of receiving them to their home, there would be an anointing before the meal.

And then we read, of course, about how the Lord our Shepherd, in Psalm 23, it tells how he anoints the head with oil. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

[23:58] Think of the healing properties of the oil poured out on the head of the sheep. The Bible talks about the oil of joy in Isaiah 61, verse 3. Notice how the oil was poured out richly.

It was poured out fulsomely. It was poured out down his beard. This oil was poured out richly, so fully that it even runs down Aaron's beard. So it's a picture of the extravagance here of God.

God's generosity towards us. It's a picture of God's overflowing blessing. He gives to us without withholding. He gives generously.

And it's a picture to us, as fellowship is, of abounding. There's a sense of abounding, of God's blessing. And God wants us to be, like that oil was poured out without measure, he wants us to be fruitful, not barren.

And really here is the secret I put to you to that abundant Christian life. It's fellowship. It's fellowship. The more that you fellowship, the more you can grow.

[24:59] The more that you fellowship, the more that you can bear fruit to God's glory. The less you fellowship, the less so. So, godly fellowship is very precious.

And godly fellowship is like that oil poured out, poured upon the head, running down on the bed. It's precious. It's precious. It's refreshing. It's a gift from God.

And God is truly gracious in pouring it out in a fulsome way. He's gracious. He's generous towards us. He doesn't hold anything back. When we think of oil, we could think all kinds of analogies about what oil represents.

We can think of how oil softens hard hearts and frees up rusted machinery. You get those bolts you can't undo. You put the oil on and it frees up that rusted machinery.

The oil soothes hurts, doesn't it? As with the sheep pictured here, it brings healing to wounds. And so there's a lot of spiritual analogies we could draw from this sense of the oil.

[25:59] And God prepared that anointing oil in a very special way as it reads in Exodus 30 from verse 22. It tells how it was only to be used for that special purpose of anointing the priest and for the sacred objects in the temple.

And when you think about it too, this godly unity that we can enjoy, it's something precious. It's something sacred. There's something sacred about it. Something holy about it. So in Exodus 30,

they're given a unique recipe for the perfumed oil.

It was made from four ingredients. Olive oil, liquid myrrh, cinnamon and cassia. It was specially prepared, a sacred oil. Think of how our fellowship is likewise sacred.

It's special. It's something unique. It's something that we should count as very important. Unlike anything we can experience elsewhere. We're not just some association, not some worldly club or organization of men, but we're a divine institution.

And this sacred anointing oil speaks to us of the pleasant aroma of that pleasing, that sweet smelling fragrance. When the priest was anointed, when Aaron was anointed with this oil, there was a fragrance about him.

[27:18] It was unique. It was wonderful. It was something that was just very special. And when we think in the word, it talks about our Lord Jesus.

There's times when he was anointed and it affected the whole house. It pervaded the whole atmosphere. It changed the whole atmosphere when Christ was anointed. And when you think the Lord Jesus Christ, the word Christ means anointed.

It's his very name. He is the anointed one. He is the Messiah. And God's church today can know that sweetness of spirit anointed fellowship. We can have that today by faith, can't we?

That godly unity. It's like perfumed oil generously poured out. He lavishes it. And this running down of the oil, notice in the Psalm 133, it appears twice in verse 2 and then a third time in verse 3.

It's got this word running down or descending. It's the same word. It's repeated three times in these three verses. So in other words, God's blessings flow down. They come down from heaven.

[28:24] It's heaven sent. And we see in James 1, it tells us that every good gift, every good and perfect gift comes from above. It comes from above. And it comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

So here we see Moses anointing Aaron. Picture form as we could represent it, as we could best understand it. Special anointing oil.

And it came down from above. It was poured down from above. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. You know, we don't say, I thank my lucky stars or I thank fluke or fate or luck. But I thank my Father in heaven for every good gift. Everything that I have. Everything that I have that is praiseworthy. Everything that I have that I'm grateful and thankful for is from above. It's from Him.

It's from Him. And there's no variableness. There's no shadow of turning with Him. In other words, He's not one who flips and flops and changes around. He's steady. He's constant. There's no shadow of turning.

[29:34] He's straight down the line. We can trust His promises. We can trust every word of His book. We can trust that He is the one that we can count on. He never changes. He's always the same.

Amen. So we see Christian fellowship is unique. It's sacred. And it's united around Christ. So look at another thought about Aaron as this anointed high priest that he was.

Aaron really points us towards the Lord Jesus to come. And in the Bible it talks about types which are kind of pictures, illustrations of truth yet to come to pass.

And Aaron is really a representative. He's pointing forward to the anointed one, Jesus Christ. Christ meaning the anointed one. And really as the word of God unfolds to us, the Lord Jesus Christ, He is our great high priest.

He stands for us and we can intercede through Him. He's that one mediator between God and men. He's that high priest that intercedes for us. And He's also that promised Messiah, the anointed one.

[30:40] So it follows on from the previous Psalm, 132, that tells us of God's promise of the Messiah to come. Again, which means the anointed one. You can read that in the foregoing Psalm, Psalm 132.

Christ is there. And then 133 unfolds the pictures of Aaron, of Aaron's head being anointed. And it's interesting, the word of God tells us that Christ is the head of the church.

It's not some man in Rome or in some other country or some headquarters of some denomination. Christ is the head of the church. He is the head, the head.

And we are members of His body, tells us in Ephesians 5. So Christ is the head and our unity is from Him. We are united with Him and united with each other. And it's interesting, as the oil poured out ran down from his head, down his beard, it fell upon his garments, on his very robe. And we think of Aaron's robe. The Bible in Exodus 28 describes that robe that he had as having the special breastplate. And upon his chest were the twelve tribes of Israel sewn into the high priest's robe.

[31:51] That's in Exodus 28 verse 12. So the robe here pictures for us, it relates to us, the very people of God. So when that outpouring came, as it fell down his head, down his face, down his beard, down his front edge, down his robe, it represents the outpouring upon the very people of God.

The very people of God, the twelve tribes. And the blessed unity flowed down from his head, to the beard, to the robe. It's a picture to us of the body of Christ. That's you and me, that are saved people here.

Oil is that picture, that symbol of the Holy Spirit. And we think how God poured out His Spirit on Jesus the head, and Jesus poured out the Spirit on His body, the church.

So we join together, we glue together in that brotherly love, and we're called to love one another. The Bible tells us this, let brotherly love continue. We might have different thoughts and experiences and ideas, but we're one body in Christ, and we should have that brotherly love. That pulls us together, that cements us together. We are the people of God, set apart unto His praise. And the Word shows us how we relate together in harmony, in that unity of the faith.

[33:07] And we have one witness to those around about. So there's a blessing, and there's an anointing. And David also sings thirdly, of an abundance.

There's an abundance. It says, as the Jew of Hermon, and as the Jew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

It's interesting the word Hermon means holy. Hermon means holy. And unity is like the Jew of heaven, it says, falling down upon God's holy mountains.

It's interesting, Mount Hermon is the highest mountain in Israel. It's the very highest mountain. It's got an altitude of 9,000, over 9,000 feet above sea level.

And Mount Hermon is known for its cool nights and its heavy dew. In the winter, it's covered with snow. And the area surrounding Hermon stays lush and green all the summer long.

[34:08] In contrast to Mount Hermon, we've got Mount Zion. Mount Zion is a much smaller mountain. And Zion is hot and dry. It's got very little dew, rain, or any moisture.

So the picture here is where God's people get together when the brethren, the brothers and sisters have that unity, that fellowship. God pours out the blessing.

There's that anointing oil. And there's like this mountain dew that falls down and comes down from heaven. That blessing of God's people unites it together. And again, it's something we receive from heaven, from our Lord.

Apart from God's blessing, we would be just like that dry, arid land of Mount Zion. But it tells us that God's going to send the dew of Hermon on the mountain of Zion.

So even when we dry, spiritually dry, we might be inclined to be barren or lacking. God's going to send that moisture, that dew, as he sends it on the Mount Hermon.

[35:12] What a contrast. Think of that for yourself. How are we? If we were to get the moisture gauge out. Have we got a dryness or have we got dew?

God wants us to be refreshed and, as it were, like that moistness of dew. God's showing us here that godly unity is a gift from God.

It comes down from heaven. And through Christ, the head of the body, by his spirit, indwelling us. So we think of that heavy dew on Mount Hermon as that symbol of life-giving water.

It tells of water, of life. Think of dew. If you've gone out maybe on a winter morning and the grass is covered with dew.

And what a freshness it brings. Amen? What a freshness. What a symbol of life-giving water, of moisture, of life. And dew dampens that dried ground.

[36:15] And it nourishes the thirsty plant. And it brings a reviving. So, friends, today we can think of that freshness that God gives to us. That life-giving dew of Hermon that brings abundance and vitality.

Really, here is the spiritual secret of freshness. It's fellowship. It's fellowship. The more we fellowship, the more we have that dew of Hermon, as it were.

We have that refreshing, that vitalising of fellowship. And as God's people are united, there's an overflow of life.

Think of going out in the rain and the freshness of the raindrops. And likewise, the freshness of the dew upon the grass. There's an overflow of life. It's the presence of our Lord, isn't it?

It's His life. He says, I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. That's the life of God, isn't it? The life of Jesus. And we see, as we think of dew, we think of fruitfulness.

[37:16] Of course, Mount Hermon was much more fruitful than Mount Zion. The fruitfulness comes because of the dew upon the grass. And Hermon was this mountain that flourished.

And it was known for this heavy dew. The people thought it must have rained the night before because there's just so much dew that was upon it. It was a fruitful place. Whereas the mountains of Zion tended to be dry and barren and lifeless.

So, it's a picture for us, I put to you, of a fellowship. Of that blessing of brethren dwelling together in unity. It's a picture of, as the dew of Hermon, it's fruitful.

There's productivity. There's flourishing there. There's refreshing. So, too. As we fellowship, there's a refreshing we get. We refresh ourselves and we can refresh others.

And there's a fullness in God's blessing over our lives. We can know that life-giving presence of our Lord. As we fellowship, it's all the more sweeter. That refreshment.

[38:19] That renewal. That nourishment. And that refreshing of joy that comes. Where does it come? As we dwell together in unity. In unity. Which has got the sense, too, of community.

And notice that unity doesn't mean uniformity. Where everyone may think necessarily exactly the same. It's not a uniformity, but it is a harmony. It is a harmony.

We've all got different parts to play in the symphony, in the orchestra. We've all got different parts to play. We can all fit together. And we've all got different ways to contribute. To join together.

Of one mind. Of one accord. And it's interesting. The Church of God is so linked. It's so connected. We're interconnected. Interdependent. And as we come together in unity, we all bring something.

We all bring something of our own personality. God's giftings. God's enablings. What God puts on our heart for us to do, to be. We can all bring something that's unique and individual of ourselves.

[39:19] And as we come together in unity, it demonstrates that togetherness. That God's love has brought us together. And brings us that blessing. That power.

And we've got one mission. Now it's interesting, really. It's been stated, really, that unity. For unity to happen, it takes humility, doesn't it? For unity to happen, it takes humility.

That there's not an overlording. There's not a diatrophies. There's not a too hard line between laity and clergy.

Really, we're brethren together. There's a sense where we're one family. We can meld together and cooperate together and be blessed together. Because we're one family.

So there's that, not a uniformity, but a harmony. And likewise, there's a humility in that there's not some pridefulness or some disparity between one another.

[40:25] We can all be one family. Just like brothers and sisters have got to get on with each other. It might be the older brother or the older sister. They might have a little bit of pecking order, but essentially, everyone's equal.

And that's the same, really, isn't it, in God's church. And so humility makes unity happen. It's when there's no pridefulness that we're putting the needs of others before ourselves. We think, for example, Philippians 2 talks about the believers there.

Paul says!

So intrinsic in those verses, it's talking about looking for others' interests, of caring for others' needs, of considering one another. And then there's that one accord. There's that one mind, that humility

between ourselves.

And when we think there's a repeated theme in the Word of God that we should love one another, love one another. And love means that we humbly serve one another and forgive one another.

[41:42] Think of godly unity. Really, it's a culture of grace and reconciliation, isn't it? And we come together to benefit one another. So when we come to church, I know I've mentioned it before, it's not always that you come to church to receive.

You actually come to church to give. To give to others. Exhorting one another. Edifying one another. Have that heart that when you come and fellowship, it's not all about you getting something.

It's also about you giving. It's about you ministering. It's about you blessing others and serving one another. Having that culture of grace and love. And so we see in Ephesians 4, it reads about this lowliness or humility again, this meekness.

It talks about longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep that unity, that word unity again, of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And so it says, God commands the blessing, even life forevermore.

I put to you today that there's an eternal dimension about the church. An eternal dimension to all of this. The blessing of God, of faith, of fellowship, speaks of life forevermore.

[42:51] God commands the blessing, even life, forevermore. The church of God is a forever family of God. We're going to be brothers and sisters forever.

Think of that. It's not like you've got some passing acquaintance. We're blood brothers and sisters by the blood of Jesus, aren't we?

We're born again and we're forever born again. We're forever brothers and sisters in Christ. We're forever the forever family of God. And there's life forevermore.

The church speaks about that forever life, doesn't it? God commands life forevermore, forever.

Really, here's life with a capital L. This is not life as the world would reckon it or count it.

Life that is perhaps an acquiring of things or a spending of time, a running out of years, and then that's the end of it. It's a life forevermore, forevermore.

[43:48] And our Lord really gives us life with a capital L. Life with an eternal quality to it. Our Lord is life-giving. He's the life source. He breathed the breath of life in Adam.

And that life, he's still letting us breathe for the time, isn't he? Until one day we'll breathe the oxygen of heaven, if there is such a thing.

We're going to breathe the atmosphere of heaven one day. For the meantime, we've got life because he's given us life. And he gives his church life. And as we're truly united in Christ, there's a sense where we've got life forevermore.

There's life eternal as we save people. Life with an eternal dimension. We've got a thought and a realization, a promise that there's heaven to come. There's a promise of heaven. And we've got eternal life, the Bible says in the present tense.

It says you may know that you have, present tense, have eternal life. You can know that today because of the promise of God. You that believe in the name of the Son of God, it says you can know that you have eternal life.

[44:48] So here's where the life of God is, where we can know the truths of eternal life and power. It's in fellowship. There's a secret there for you and me to have that heavenly mindset and affection.

We can already have, as it were, a preparing for the life forevermore in the present day. There's an eternal dimension to our fellowship. And as we experience the life and power of God, it's a foretaste of heaven yet to come.

You know, when we sing some of these songs, we might have some discordant voices here and there, but one day we'll be singing them perfectly. So this is just the practice time.

This is the choir practice, as it were, for heaven above, isn't it? And one day we'll have that true realization of heaven. For the meantime, it's just a foretaste of heaven when God's people gets together.

He's still fitting us together for heaven. But there is that eternal aspect as God's people that there is life forevermore for you that know him as God's children. And one day we'll gather above in that perfect gathering place.

[45:57] And God's church, for the meantime, is our gathering together, this side of glory. It's God's design for us. We see many references, of course, to that eternal dimension, that eternal dimension.

We see in Acts 4, when they got together, it says they prayed. The place was shaken where they were assembled together. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of all them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. So they had great grace. They had great power. There was witness. They knew God's life, his presence and his power. And so, as we think about fellowship, the preciousness of it, the blessing of it upon our lives.

We think of the abounding, the abundance of it, as pictured in the overflowing oil upon Aaron's head. We think of his presence and his power. We think of life forevermore.

There's an eternal truth here that we don't want to miss. And really, we have the words of eternal life. It's in our hands. We hold forth the word of life to a world that's lost and dying.

[47:01] We've got something precious. That's why church is important. Because our world desperately needs these words of life. When we can invite people to come, of course, better yet, take it to the streets.

But where we can, we can minister. We can reach people. People need these words of life. They need to be broadcast far and wide through every means we can. And so we need to rise up and be the church.

Well, we've got the opportunity. We're not under some lockdown. There's no government imposition that's stopping us from fellowshiping. There's nothing stopping you coming tonight at six o'clock other than whether you've got enough petrol in your car.

I mean, honestly, what's stopping us from being the church? We've got no reason to be discouraged, but rather we should be encouraged. God commands us, commands a blessing when we get together.

And it's life forevermore. And we are messengers. As it were, the church is like a soul rescue station in this darkening world. We've got the words of life, life forevermore.

[48:00] And so when we think of the promises of God, when we get together, there's a great benefit, a great blessing. We see verses like this one. When our Lord promises, even if we're small in number, it tells us for where two or three are gathered, he says, together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

So when God's people come together, he promises to be present. And God commands a blessing there, even life forevermore. So we read now how that it's there that the Lord gives his blessing.

Truly there's a blessing. We don't want to miss that. When we get together in unity, when we worship him, God sends his blessing. He promises to. He promises to be with us.

And he promises that he'll command a blessing when we are united in worship, in fellowship. Truly it's a foretaste of heaven. We don't want to miss that. Don't miss that.

So may the Lord give us a unity in Christ that we might be, as the Romans 15, 6 puts it, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[49:13] Here's the purpose of the church. To glorify. To glorify God. To give him praise. And the early church knew this great oneness when they met.

It says they continued. There was a steadfastness. They were committed to this. In the apostles' doctrine, in the teaching of the word of God. In fellowship, it says. In breaking of bread and in prayers.

So there's an eternal bond. And God's blessings are upon us. And they're upon us forever. So our Christian fellowship here is only a foretaste of the perfect fellowship, yet ahead of us.

We will know with each other in heaven. Think of it as I close. There is power in unity. There is power in unity. Here's just a worldly picture of some ants carrying a branch.

And we think that those ants on their own couldn't carry that branch. No way. Too heavy. But there's power when the ants get together. When they're united, there's power.

[50:17] There's strength in power, isn't there? And there's likewise in Christian fellowship, too. We can be a Christian that maybe doesn't kind of commit to fellowship.

We're going to be like an ant that's on their own. They've only got so much strength. But when we get together, there's that picture there of a strength. Amen. There's a powerful realisation that happens when we are united together.

And if you think about it, when a storm comes, it's really just millions of individual raindrops, isn't it? And these individual raindrops do not do their own thing.

But they work together as a cohesive unit. And so the storm is powerful. And so the storm is powerful. But it's really just individual raindrops. When we think of you and me, we're just weak, limited human vessels, aren't we?

I speak for myself. There's nothing much to one of us, an individual of us. But when we get together, there's something powerful. Something powerful.

[51:27] And so we can be mindful of that. We think of unity, of the power that's in unity. It fosters love. It strengthens prayer. It overcomes differences.

And we see the power of God at work. We can minister to others. We see the power of a team of horses pulling together. They can do more than just one on its own.

We see the power of a train that's pulled by three engines. It's got much more power. We see the power of prayer when two or three, two or more agree. There's power in their prayer.

There's more power. Amen. There's power of love when a family gets together. And what about the church? There's power here this morning. Because we're united.

Because we're brethren dwelling together in unity. There's power in that church body. With that common love and focus, that love for our Lord and his word. God has commanded the blessing.

[52:27] He's commanded the blessing. That's powerful, isn't it? He's commanded it. If God commands something, then that's important, isn't it? He's commanded the blessing.

When the brethren get together. So, can I underline again? Fellowship is important. Let's treasure it. Let's value it while we have it.

Before it's taken away again. Let's value fellowship. It's important. It's precious. There's anointing.

There's God's outpoured. Poured sweet spirit. A sweet fragrance happens of his worship.

Picture of worship as an atmosphere of worship, as it were. Of that. The sensations of it, isn't it?

There's a sensation of worship. That anointing.

That outpouring of God. That's when we get together that it happens. That's when we get together that it happens. Wouldn't it be a shame if the summer report, oh, revival's broken out.

[53:27] Oh, I missed that one. You know, if there was a meeting that we missed and we think, oh, I should have been there. That's when something happened. And we can miss that, can't we?

There's an abundance. There's a fresh dew upon the mountains. A fresh dew. A freshness. A fruitfulness. And there's an eternal life.

It's life forevermore. This is about eternal life. This is about what matters more than this passing earthly life, which is very limited and time bound. This is without time. It's beyond time.

This is eternal. Life evermore. Life forevermore. So we can be knowing that eternal life, that eternal power of God himself at work amongst us, within us, as the gospel life message goes forth.

And we can be that force to be reckoned with on this planet, all for the glory of God. So how to be abounding, how to be blessed, how to know spiritual life and power when the brethren dwell together in unity.

[54:32] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you.