

Refreshing

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[0:00] Tonight I'd like to address the theme of refreshing our faith, refreshing our spiritual life. We see that Peter preached in Acts chapter 3 and just one extract from his message is these words in Acts 3 verse 19.

Peter says, Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Peter says, Of course we see the context there, it talks about being converted, that's the starting point really.

But we could think I suppose in a way of the thought of refreshing of our own faith as believers here tonight and how can we as it were press the refresh button on our relationship with God.

There's references to this word refresh and there's that sense where God wants us to, to refresh our faith, our zeal, our love. Notice that it's the presence of the Lord that is refreshing, the presence of Jesus.

[1:10] Notice that there's a repenting and then there's a refreshing. So there's that mental change to repent, it means that mind change, that change that happens on the inside. There's that decision to seek after the Lord.

And then after the repenting then comes the refreshing, the presence of the Lord. It comes from the Lord, it comes from heaven. And there's this theme, this repeated theme of refreshing through the Bible.

When do we need a refreshing? We notice our need for refreshing is when we are weary. We see in Isaiah a reference there. If you would have a refreshing, here's the prescription for you to follow.

If you follow these directions, you'll find that refreshing, that renewing, that recharging. Because we know we can all have times when we need a refreshing, a renewing of strength. We see Isaiah 40 verse 29.

It's a familiar passage which talks about this sense of renewing our strength. It says of the Lord that he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.

[2:15] Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But it says, They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. And they shall walk and not faint. So again, there's that theme of refreshing, of increasing strength, of renewing strength.

What is it that we are to do? Then it tells us here, they that wait upon the Lord. It tells of faith. When we think of this phrase of waiting upon the Lord, it's a repeated term in the Bible, to wait upon the Lord.

What does it mean? You could put it that it tells of faith. It tells of trust, to trust the Lord, to rest upon him and his promises that he will deliver.

We can trust him. We can trust his word. We can trust his timing as well. When we are waiting, there's that sense of we're waiting for him, his timing. We're trusting in his timing.

[3:21] We're depending upon him. We're drawing from him our spiritual strength. And when you think of that thought of waiting, as we have to often wait when we go to an appointment somewhere, there's that sense of patience, isn't there?

God is teaching us patience. And we think through life we've got to wait sometimes for God to move, for God to take action. And for the meantime, we just have to be patient as we trust him, as we patiently wait.

And then as we draw near to him, as we trust in his care, that sense of waiting upon the Lord, we're waiting on his plan for us. And I put to you that we all need this refreshing, this spiritual refreshing. There was one time when our son lived at home that he was away for a couple of weeks. And then he came home from this big trip and he got to start his car and it wouldn't start.

His battery needed a recharge. And it's almost like that thought that spiritually we need a recharge sometimes. We need God to recharge our battery. We can suffer power leakage.

[4:26] There's that sense of a renewal that we need, a refreshing, a recharging. Isaiah tells us where the renewal comes from. It says the renewing of our strength, it comes from waiting upon the Lord.

It comes from him, from heaven. And then it is then that we can mount up with wings as eagles. It is then after we've waited upon the Lord as we've renewed our strength, it is then that we can run and not be weary, that we'll walk and not faint.

And he will revitalise our strength. It's like he promises us there in that scripture. Paul, in his letter to Philemon, talked about this theme of refreshing too.

And Philemon has been called an instruction on how to refresh the saints. We see one reference in Philemon 1 verse 7. Paul writes to Philemon, For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

But there's that very literal sense of the bowels spoken of here. It is what was written. It's speaking of bowels. Some would consider it more of compassion, of words to the effect of compassion.

[5:40] But the literal wording is bowels. And you think of bowels, it speaks of the inner man, doesn't it? The inner being. When we get those butterflies in the stomach, when we get that unease, that trepidation, that we feel it in the bowels, there's a sense where the deep inside core of us is moved.

And it's the core of our being, of who we are. It's hard to put it into English words, really, but it literally is the bowels of the saints, that heart, that mind, but really much stronger than that.

It's the very core of us, the very fibres of our being. And when we think of this term, bowels, it embodies emotion and affection. So Paul's saying here that the saints, in the very inward parts, are refreshed by this man Philemon.

And Paul commends Philemon for that, that sense where his emotion and his affection are refreshed. There's a recharging, there's a blessing that Philemon imparted to others, the refreshing that he imparted.

And Paul uses this word that he identified with the bowels of Jesus Christ, that even the very bowels, the very compassion, the very heart of Christ our Lord is embodied here.

[6:56] How can we relate that to ourselves? Do we identify with our Lord and his very innermost parts? Do we identify with the Lord Jesus and his great compassion, the great heart, the big heart of God, the very innermost deepest feelings of love, of innermost mercies, the most powerful feelings of our Lord?

Paul says, I greatly long after you all, with that overwhelming heart of God within me, the very heart of the Lord Jesus, that I long for you, that I care for you.

And Paul is saying of Philemon that he was able to refresh the saints in this very innermost way, in this deep way. Philemon was a man who gave a refreshing to the hearts of the saints.

And Paul commended him for that. We can think of that for ourselves. Well, the very heart, the very loving heart, the very tenderness of Christ and his innermost being, we should have that heart for others, of refreshing others, in that same deeper sense of the word.

And that freshness, that refreshing. And we think of our spiritual lives. I think of my own spiritual life, and think how we can get where it's lacking.

[8:11] Have you ever had that occasion where you go to the fridge, and you open the door, and there's something that smells a bit off, a bit stale? I know it can happen, can't it?

That food gets stale, it loses the freshness. And what about spiritually? We can lose that freshness that God wants for us to have, to be fresh, to be revitalised, to that sense of reviving, of restoring. And that sense of refreshing, when you think of refreshing, we can think of the quenching of thirst, from a cool drink. Peter puts it here, in his message, as we've really only captured that little

segment of his message, but he tells us of a refreshing, and he tells us where to find that refreshing. He says, times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. So when we want to have that refreshing, that spiritual kind of refreshing, God is the author of it, he's the source of it. Times of refreshing, it says, come from him, from God. He is the source, he does the work, that refreshing work. And we simply have to lean upon the arms, the everlasting arms of the almighty God, to rest upon him, to trust in his care, and refreshing, this refreshing work, it's like a work of his grace, that's done in hearts by his Holy Spirit.

[9:31] Do we want that, that refreshing? Peter says, times of refreshing, come from the presence of the Lord. It says we rest in him.

Do we want that? How badly do we want God's refreshing, to know more of that passion, that strengthening of our walk, that deepening of our closeness to him, that answering into his presence, to be right, in right relationship with our Lord, to know, as it were, the bowels of Jesus Christ, in other words, to know his very tenderness, to know his very deep, biggest heart that Christ has, the very heart that extends his mercy and compassion, and his grace.

Do we have that same innermost compassion of Christ to others, as Paul sought to describe it? That we can be so fully identified with Christ, that we will truly be Christ to our neighbours, our community, that we'll be motivated with that, that deep heart of God, who is the lover of our soul, to be immersed in his love, to be loving like Christ would love.

That's, that's the sense of these bowels, this, this innermost moving of God within, that will, he will move so, move within us. So, we see that times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord. We think of the presence of the Lord, we think of worship, godly worship. Godly worship will refresh us, as we rejoice, as we sing, as we meditate, as we are teaching and admonishing one another, with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.

[11:15] The sound of worship brings a comforting, a refreshing. There's something special about entering into his presence. We see one occasion here in 1 Samuel 16, where the occasion was that Saul was in a malevolent state, he was in that ill state of mind, and it says that an evil spirit was upon Saul.

In 1 Samuel 16, 23, the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, and then it says, David took a harp and played with his hand, and so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

So, when David ministered, there was a refreshing. Now, we could, I think, rightfully consider that perhaps David uttered a psalm. You see, the word of God filled with many of David's psalms.

It's likely, I put to you, that David uttered a psalm. Maybe there's words of scripture that he sang, there's words of praise, of worship. It was uplifting music. It was good for the soul.

And so, we see the time of refreshing came for Saul through David, times of refreshing. These are things we can pray for, we can seek God for that refreshing.

[12:36] We could consider when it talks about times of refreshing, it's like times of revival. The refreshing of God comes. Along with spiritual fellowship, we see down through church history, when God moved upon his people, when there was a mighty turning towards God, and it was evident in communities refreshed, with souls brought into the kingdom of God.

It was like a refreshing rain. It was like a flowing river. It was like this refreshing of a cool drink of water. And God can work in our own hearts, as he has in history, past, he can work in our own number, in our own community, one soul at a time.

Refreshing. When do we need refreshing? When we get weary. I don't know about you, but there's times weariness comes. And Jeremiah tells, how the Lord says, I have satiated, or supplied, satisfied, that weary soul, and I have replenished, every sorrowful soul.

It's, that weary soul can be refreshed. That weary soul can be replenished. As we realise our weariness, as we realise, life can wear us down, can't it? We all have times where, it's like, it's full on, it's, it's intense, there's sometimes little time for rest, that we can know God's supply.

We can know his new power, his replenishing. When our soul becomes weary, we can find that rest for our soul. God's spirit will refresh us.

[14:17] He does a refreshing work. It's like that sense of a Sabbath, if you like, isn't it? The sense of a Sabbath. It's good for us to have a Sabbath. As it were, a time of rest, a spiritual rest.

It's like taking a holy pause. I know sometimes we can, be so minded, and I can be inclined to it, that it's all a rush, a rush and a rush, but we don't have that holy hush.

Instead of the rush, we should have a holy hush, like a, a silah moment. It's interesting in the Psalms, we read the word silah, which means, pause.

and consider. It's interesting, 75 times, silah. Pause and consider.

Like that holy pause. Take time to just, wait, to lean upon him, to draw closer, to lean in deeper. That time of silence really, isn't it?

[15:18] helps us to refresh, our thinking. Julie's good at reminding me, of doing that, because I can sometimes be, a male version, of a Martha.

You heard of the story, as there's a familiar one, of Martha and Mary. In Luke 10, we read, of these two women. Luke 10, 38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman, named Martha, received him, into her house.

And she had a sister, called Mary, which also sat, at Jesus' feet, and heard, his word. But Martha, was comfort about, much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou, not care, that my sister, have left me, to serve alone?

Bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou, art careful, and troubled, about, many things.

But one thing, is needful. And Mary hath chosen, that, good part, which shall not be taken, away from her. Here was Mary, and Martha, and Mary, it says, sat at his feet, and heard his word.

[16:42] She had a holy hush. Whereas Martha, was all fretting, and fussing, and worrying, and troubled, wondering, who's going to help me? How will I get, everything done?

There's food to prepare, there's cleaning, there's, we've got a guest here, there's dishes to be done. You could imagine, the goings on, in, Martha's mind.

And we can be, just like Martha, I know I can be. We get so busy in life, that we fail to stop, and truly wait, upon the Lord. Mary hath chosen, that good part, just sitting at his feet.

Sometimes just take that time, to take time, with him. One to one time, with God. She took that time, for the presence, of the Lord. We too, could benefit, to take that holy time, to pause, to draw closer, to the presence of God.

Stop and take time, with God. And then you can, renew your strength. There's a refreshing, that will come, so don't neglect that, or forget that. And we see, oft times, he, urges us to come, and know that rest.

[17:51] As he, makes that appeal, in Matthew 11, come unto me, all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I, will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest, unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden, is light.

Now, our prayer for our church, is that we be, thirsty believers, that we, be ever drawing, closer to God, drawing from him, from his full supply.

And, so we need to acknowledge, our need of rest, that spiritual rest, that saving grace of God, that we would know, our dryness, and his supply, and know his spiritual refreshing, his bounty, his supply.

As we draw nigh, surely he will, draw nigh to us, his presence, his refreshing. So we see, that thought of the, refreshing, of that restoring, of that pouring out, on dry ground.

Will we have that heart, to cry out, for his refreshing, to obey his call, to come unto him, simply that. Paul talks about, where some, had this ministry, of being refreshers.

[19:08] He tells of some, in Corinth, that they have refreshed, my spirit, and yours. They had this ministry, of being a refresher. Of others.

What about you and me? Can we see, while there's others, around about, that I could refresh them, I could encourage them. There's people, with wounded hearts, and broken spirits.

There's people, hurting everywhere, all around us, crushed, with deep wounds. And the healer, of the broken hearted, can come, and bind up our wounds. So let's have that mind, that we will be a refresher, of the spirit, of others.

Refreshing, comes from the presence, of the Lord. Now we can be conscious, of his ever abiding presence. We know, it's a familiar, phrase people use, that they go to church, for the presence of God.

But really, the presence of God, is not in a building, so much as, he is with us always. And we don't leave his presence, when we leave this place. His presence goes with us.

[20:18] And there's that, wonderful truth. And surely, he never leaves us. He never leaves us. There's that, sense where his presence, is always with us. So his presence, is with you, when you're out, on the work site.

When you're out, in the shopping place. When you're out, with your day by day life. His presence, is with you there. He doesn't leave us. He's always with us. And, even more so, in those deepest valleys of life.

He says, I'm with you. I'm with you. Lo, I am with you. Always. Even. Unto the end of the world. So God is with you. Always.

Always with you. As we gather, there's almost, a deeper sense, that he's with us. It should be that, as we gather, there's, a sense of, his closeness.

There's, a sense of his healing. Of, of that lifting of spirits. Of that, of that, of that, of that, supply, to our dryness.

[21:17] Of that, ministering to our bruising. That nurturing, to our lack. That watering, of our soul. And, likewise, when we're with others, we can be imparters, of that refreshing.

As we saw, Paul talked about there. We can impart, refreshing words. Now, these are refreshing words. The words of God. We can be an imparter of that. Minister that.

And so, let's be a messenger, of those words, of life. May we be like Philemon, and see beyond our own selves, our own needs, and think about others.

Because we're blessed, to be a blessing. We're refreshed, to be a refresher. There's a refreshing, a restoring we can give. We see, when, the people of God, had been with Jesus, when they'd been, in his presence, there was, a, recharging, that happened.

After the outpouring, after the presence, of the Lord was manifest, they knew the presence, of the Lord, something happened to them. There was a change. We see, in Acts 4, 13, the people saw, the boldness of Peter, and John.

[22:34] And they perceived, that they were, unlearned and ignorant men. They marveled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had, been with Jesus. It was, the being with Jesus, that made all the difference. There was a change.

Times of refreshing came, when they had been with Jesus. And, we see the boldness, the unleashing of the church here, in Acts 4. The unleashing of spiritual power. We see that, that zeal, and boldness of Peter, and John.

My prayer is, that we would be, such an emboldened people. It comes as we spend time, with Jesus. It comes as we have, the presence of the Lord. We have that refreshing.

And then we see, the church praying, for more of the same, for more boldness. Lord, behold their threatenings, grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness, they may speak thy word.

It's seeking after that, that refreshing. Hungering and wanting, more of that supply. More of his ministry. More of that power. And when he does minister, and anoint us, we see, it's for a reason, it's for a purpose.

[23:42] You know, there's lots of talk in, some circles of churches, about the anointing, they kind of major on it. All this hype, that hyped up talk, about the anointing, and, oh, that's an anointed preacher, or go there for the anointing, this or that.

But when we see, what the word of God says, about where our Lord, was anointed, it was for a purpose, it was for a reason. As we know, especially when our Lord, was anointed, it was a special time, a special anointing.

But it says, of our Lord, he says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he had anointed me, to preach the gospel to the poor. He had sent me, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

It says of our Lord, that the Lord has anointed Christ, that he would be a messenger, a deliverer of the gospel, a preacher of the good news. The refreshing comes, the anointing comes for a purpose. It says we wait upon the Lord, as we trust in the Lord, we'll know his power, and God will give us his refreshing, he'll give us that emboldening, he'll give us that outpouring, that anointing that our Lord knew.

[24:57] And we likewise can be messengers, for his sake. He will fill us with his power, for a purpose. So what is the anointing for? We see that God's presence, his outpouring, his infilling, is that we'll minister to others.

It's not so much the anointing is for us, to benefit from the anointing, but for us to impart to others, the broken hearts of the captives, the bruised, the blind.

We can be used of God, when God refreshes us, we can be used of God, to impart to others. Can we know that refreshing today, in our own spiritual lives?

The Bible says we can. We can know that refreshing, that refilling of spiritual life. Yet we can be reluctant.

We can be making excuses, why God cannot work in me. We see a reference in Proverbs, talks about, the slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets.

[26:03] And it's a picture here of a man, who'd rather stay in the comfort zone. He'd rather just stay, in the easy chair, because to leave the house, there could be dangers out there.

Of course there's not really, a lion in the street. There's not really some lion out there, that's going to eat you up. It's just an excuse. And we can all think of ways, why it's too hard, to step out of, that reluctance zone.

To not trust God. To not be used of God. Take the challenge, and step out in faith. And do something new for God. Do something for God's glory and praise. There's lots of reasons why, we can be like this man, pictured here, the slothful man.

Really it's a lack of faith, isn't it? That I'd rather just stay, where it's safe and comfortable, because if I do something for God, I could face some danger, I could face some criticism, there could be some opposition.

Yet God calls us to boldness, and the church prayed for boldness, and they saw that they received boldness, when they had been in the presence of Jesus, our Lord. And we can likewise, we can know God's empowerment, we can know God's enabling, we can know God's overcoming power.

[27:17] We can be that God-fearing people, that would fear God rather than men. We'll go out, even if there is a lion in the streets, we'll go out, even if we might face some danger, or some real challenge, or there might be some real opposition.

We'll fight that good fight of the faith. So let's have that heart, to yearn after God, that presence of God. As we see, Moses, he drew nigh to God.

We are in the very presence, of the Holy God. You know, we're not at the burning bush, but he's here, as real as he was at the burning bush. We can answer in, and commune with him. It's the presence of the Lord.

That's what's going to bring the refreshing. That personal time, that praying time. And it says, really, we should be praying always. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

That sense of, we can easily feel like fainting, when there's trying times. We should face them with prayer, with courage. Why? Because the presence of the Lord is with us.

[28:20] James talks about facing up to trials and tests, and he says that the trying of your faith is going to work. It's going to bring patience. It's going to produce patience and perseverance.

So even when we face the most trying times of our life, his presence is with us then. As we read of the Psalm 23, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou art with me. His presence is always with us. So, let's not make excuses why we cannot stand out as a Christian. Oh, there's a lion in the streets.

It's not, it's false. It's not true. It's a cop-out. It's an excuse. Whose presence is going to dominate your life? Will it be the presence of the Lord?

Or will it be the world and its ways and vanities? How can we refresh our love for God, that devotion? Will we hear his voice?

[29:23] Hear his voice. Have that time with his word. Our Lord says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. It's hearing his voice. And he tells you, I am with you always.

He tells you, men ought always to pray. He tells you, come unto me, all you that labour, and I have you laid, and I will give you rest. Rest unto your souls.

He says, Mary hath chosen the good part. She's sitting at his feet, hearing his word. Refreshing comes from the presence of the Lord.

Know that presence. Know his presence. Know he's with you, always with you. Know his guiding, his inner working, even the bowels, as it were. Even the very inner heart and compassion, the very fibre and core, who is Christ, should be our heart.

[30:38] That our love should be so, that we want to refresh others. As his heart would want to refresh, we will want to refresh. We'll be like Philemon, that will refresh the spirit of others.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that your word is the ultimate refreshing, for our souls. We hear how you say, that you will bring rest unto our souls.

Lord, help us to have, that holy hush, to have that, sealer, where we just pause, and contemplate, all the goodness of God.

Lord, help us to know, that your presence isn't something, that is restricted to some time slot, on the church calendar, Lord, but your presence is with us always.

Lord, you are always with us. We thank you for that comfort. Lord, we thank you that times of refreshing, shall come from your presence. Lord, we pray that we'll be as those, that would wait upon the Lord, and we will renew our strength.

[31:42] Lord, help us to, to take that scripture, and to, make it live, in our shoes, Lord. Let it be that we will, truly, wait upon you.

And then we shall renew our strength. We shall mount up with wings as equals. We shall run, and not be weary. We shall know that, overcoming power. Lord, help us, likewise, to have that heart, to refresh others, to, to, to, to, find those refreshing scriptures, that, as we see others, it's why you've given us the anointing, as it were, it's why we are, filled with your spirit, so we can impart, refreshing words to others.

Lord, help us to be, moved with your heart, to do that. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.