

“Fear of Being Blessed”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, November 30th, 2014

I’m in love with heaven. I’m in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. I’m in love with His Word. I’m in love with His Spirit. You ever get to the place where you just can’t get enough of something? I mean, you ever have something that was just so good that, even when you were full, you just wanted more? I have never encountered a time when I’ve been with God and I said, “That’s enough.” I’ve been where I’ve been rebuked so bad, it just tore my skin off; I’ve been where I’ve been so overwhelmed, it just pushed tears out of my eyes; I’ve been where I thought my brain would explode, but I’ve never been where I just wanted to shoo God off, and say, “I don’t want no more of You.” It has always been, “God, You are so rich and so full.” Sometimes, we’ve just got to say, “Amen, thank You, Jesus.”

Speaking of thank You, Jesus, our theme for the month is:

2 Corinthians 2:14 *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

We’re going to do something a little different; we did this last year, and it was such a blessing. I’m actually going to share the whole bit in the blessing this morning, because it’s not the kind of thing where just one person can bring enough.

So, if you would bow your heads with me for just a moment. Lord, we thank You, Almighty God, Reverenced One, Sovereign One, Omnipotent One, Omniscient, Everlasting Father, Great Counsellor, You Mighty warrior, You awesome God to us, we come to you and we thank You. God, we thank You for waking us up today. God, we thank You for moving us cross the floor. We thank You for opening our eyes. God, we thank You for putting words in our mouths this morning. We thank You for filling our hearts and letting them beat this morning. We thank you for setting the sun in the sky. God, we thank You for being the kind of good to us that we always can’t get enough. We always got to come back to You and say, “Only You can do this thing, for truly there is none like You.” Our wonderful Father; great God in Heaven, You wonderful lover of our souls. We thank You this morning. We thank You for a time to come before You this morning; You treat us like Your sons and daughters. You snooker us up to Your bosom. God, You look forward to when we bring You praises. Lord, we aren’t anything at all, but, yet You dwell inside our praises. God, You say, “Consider My sons and daughters, for this is them that I have loved and shed blood for.” We thank You for that this morning. God, we thank You for giving us the answers in our lives. There’s not been a time when we turn to You that we leave disappointed or unhappy. We leave changed, but we don’t leave in a state of saying, “I regret,” we only leave in a state of saying, “Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, Lord.” God, as You have blessed our worship time, God, to be able to have audience with You. We pray now that You would add a blessing onto Your service, as we come and offer unto You the sacrifice of our hearts and our lives. This we do, and commit and claim, in Jesus name. And everyone said, amen. Amen.

Last year, I don’t know—we have a lot of services, of course—we used to have services every day, so that’s not really a lot. Last year we had a beautiful Thanksgiving service, and we had the chance to have a few people come up and they had to share what they were being thankful for. Ken A. came up and shared—it was going to be Ken and Abby, but, Ken said he forgot to tell his wife, so she wasn’t here. But, Sis, he shared so beautifully. I remember that whole attitude of gratitude you shared, Kenny. That whole aura of praise, and that whole spirit of thankfulness. You shared about how Pastor Paine taught you, and it stayed with me ever since you shared last year. Then, Sister Norma and Mike came up and they shared,

and Mike, I don't think there was a person here that wasn't brought to tears as you said, "Yes, I bring my requests to God, the same thing, every day, every week, 'God, bless my family. God, thank You for what You've done for me. God, thank You for being saved!" Sister Norma said, "I've been raised a certain way, but I just want to tell you that I love the Lord!" When you said that your son ran through singing that song, I have not been able to get that song out of my head, all year! Hallelujah. "Nothing but the Blood," nothing but the blood, nothing but the blood, amen. Then we had Brother Laygoze and Sister Lorraine, and Sister Lorraine—most of us hadn't even heard you talk! Most of us hadn't even heard you talk! And she shared about how, "I never thought I'd be moving into this area." That whole service stayed with me all year. "I never thought I'd be moving here, and I met the Lord some time ago, and I had so many things happening in my life, but then I found something that changed everything and made me say, "Thank You, Jesus. I found a chance to be born again, and what a wonderful life it is to know God as my personal, awesome savior!" What a beautiful testimony, and then, Laygoze, I felt you, bro, I felt you as he stood up here and he got to preaching, and he said, "You don't even know where I came from." He said, "You see what God has done, but you didn't see what God brought me from. You see the blessing after God has been working on me, but, before that, I was one of them that needed that Word. Now everybody says, 'What a wonderful, nice guy. You seem to have it all together,' but you just don't know, before God touched me, I was only a streeter, and then after he touched me, it's like all that stuff never happened." Woo! Yeah, it stayed with me all year, can you tell?

We'd like to have the opportunity to have a few more people come and share. You know, there's no such thing as comparing things in God. You know, depending on point you are in your life—yeah, this is just thrown in for free. I'm not preaching yet. As a matter of fact, my part is not going to be that long—but, depending on where you are in your life, different things mean so much more to you at that time. So, whereas one thing could mean an enormous amount of answers for you, and another thing, you don't even see the relevance, just give it time. Then, that is the thing that God stored for you, to be such a blessing. So, I'm going to ask a few people to come up, if they would, please. I'm going to ask—and you brothers and sister, just take your time—I'm going to ask George and Zena, if they would come first. Right after that, we're going to give it up for our young people, as Maxx, and Cassidy, and Savanah are going to come. After the young people, we're going to bring Sister Linda S, and Brother Chris S. Could we give the Lord a praise as they come?

George: I was kind of surprised; my wife came back into the auditorium, here, because she was going to teach class, and I was going to speak for her, and talk about how wonderful, and how thankful she is that she has a great husband, and all that, but, since she showed up, I'm going to let her say all that. We're talking about Thanksgiving. I'm very thankful; every day, when I wake up, I'm very thankful. I thank God. If you don't thank God, every day, for what He's given you, and what he's done for you, you start losing love, mercy, kindness, tenderness... You'll lose that, because that's not the love of God. You know, I look back at my life, and we sing a song about the victory of Jesus, talking about how He made the lame to walk. At one time, I was lame. I couldn't walk; my footsteps, they were all over the place. Christ healed me to where I was able to walk the straight and narrow, healed me to where I was able walk straight; healed me to where I was able to walk, period. The blind to see. I was blind. Just like a lot of us, here, you know? We were all blind until God healed us and we were able to see. I'm thankful every day for that. Like Mike said, he talked about Philippians, saying that it's a peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). To know that peace is to know Christ, and that is worth all my thanks every day. Like I said, there's thing that go on in my life that I ask God, I said, "God, I—not that I need it, but, Lord, can I have it?" Those prayers don't get answered. The prayers that do get answered are the ones that I truly spiritually need. I am very thankful for that He watches over me, and He keeps me safe. There have been a few deaths here, recently. I just lost my snow-partner, my co-

worker... He was talking to me, and he said, "George, have you ever had kidney stones?" I said, "Yeah, I've had kidney stones," and I described it, and how it hurt. He said, "Yeah, I got kidney stones." I said, "You need to go to the doctor and get it X-rayed. He went in, and they did the X-rays, and they found it was cancer. They found tumors. That was in August; he passed away last Saturday. We buried him yesterday. But, you know, I'm so thankful for the love of God, and salvation, and Jesus Christ. Again, I want to thank every one of you for the card that you guys signed, for the passing of my aunt. She was very dear to my brother and I; my brother Vernon and I, because we grew up knowing her before she married my uncle. So, again, thank you for the card.

Zena: I am thankful for George. If I hadn't met him, I don't know that I would have found the Truth. He brought me to a Jesus name church where I found the Truth, and he came back to the church, here, and I am very thankful for that. I'm thankful for my church family. This last year's been really rough on me; these last couple of months, I feel like I'm going to get better. I know I'm going to get better. Let me say that I'm thankful for all of you. God bless you.

Savannah: Thank you. Okay, so I was asked to share what I'm thankful for. I'm thankful for my family and everything that they've given me. Even though we fight at times, but that's normal, because not a perfect family. All the people in my family: my mom, my dad, Cassidy, Bianka, and my nephews, Daniel and Janus. They're crazy, but I love them. Cassidy is like the best sister ever. She thinks I'm like the annoying little sister at times, but she's still always there, no matter what. Even when she gets mad at me, like ten minutes later, we're both, "I love you; I'm sorry!" Another person that is not family, but is like family to me is Ashley B. She's not here today. She's had a lot of rough times in her life, like I have, but, after all, stars can't shine without darkness. He heart is humble and loving. The person that has made one of the greatest impacts on my life is my grandpa. Him and I are like two peas in a pod; like, no matter what, he's just always there, and he always makes me happy. I can tell him anything, because it's really hard for me to explain how I feel. He has gotten me through everything in my life.

[Editor's note: Cassidy was too overwhelmed at this point to speak, so Savannah said a few things from Cassidy's notes.]

Savannah: She said, "I'm thankful for my family, friends, and being able to have an education. I'm thankful to be able to be surrounded by all positive people that I'm around on a daily basis. Whenever I need to talk to someone, I can either come to any of you people here. I am thankful for the love, but the min person I'm thankful for is my mom. I know she doesn't hear it on a daily basis, but she's the main reason why I've been trying so hard. The beginning of my school year was so terrible, but I managed to turn it around, somehow, and I think it's because of her. We're friends, and I can always go to her, and she gives me the greatest advice. I know I'm stubborn and hard-headed with her a lot, but that's how a teenager is. At the end of the day, the only people that will always be there for me is family, and everyone treats me well."

Maxx: Hello. Well, I'm thankful for my life, because, years ago, I could've slipped away at birth, but, see, God, he had a plan for me. I don't know what it is, yet, but, still, I know He's going to use me. That's what I'm thankful for.

Linda: Good morning. Last night, Sonia sent me a message, saying, "Would you like to share what you're thankful for?" I just thought about it for a few seconds, and I was like, "But I'm going

through something right now. I'm hurting. But the devil's been attacking me this week, and he's been going through my scars." But, then, I'm like, "But I've got a lot to be thankful for." It doesn't matter what I'm going through right now. God is right there, He deserves all the praise that I can give Him. He took me out from all the things that have been hurting me. He is the One who is healing me. It doesn't matter what the devil tries to do. So, I am very thankful that I am here. I am very thankful that I have all of you as my family; I love all of you so much. All of you. I'm thankful that I have my children, that they're healthy. That's never going to change. So, it doesn't matter what we go through; God deserves our praise. I praise Him and I thank Him so much. All of that, when Sonia asked, it just took me a few seconds to think about it, and I said, "Yes, Sonia, I'll be right there." I love you all, and God bless you.

Chris: Good morning. You know, I was pretty sure of what I was going to say, and I'm still going to say it, I'm just going to pull a little audible right here. I'm thankful when I hear testimonies, and praise reports, and thankfulness, you know? I mean, what Cassidy said about Abby, you know, I thank God for that. It's something that you can't buy, and it's something that the world can't give. It's something that, I know Abby has spent days and nights praying for the best for her children, and that's what comes out of it. Cassidy, you're an awesome young lady. Savannah, you are, too. Every—the children—these testimonies of faithfulness, and praise and honor and glory to God, you know, that's one of the many things that I'm thankful for. I'm thankful for, you know, I've always been fed, you know, and, what does the Bible say? with food and raiment therefore be content (1 Timothy 6:8). He's given me so much more than that, you know? I'm thankful that Jesus Christ gives me a hope that rises above something like Black Friday. This world is going nuts, you know? They ought to call it black-eye Friday, you know, because everybody winds up with black eyes. I'm not—I don't have anything against Black Friday, you know, people can get up at one o'clock in the morning and go to the mall, you know? They think I'm crazy because I like to work out. They think I'm crazy because I like lifting metal weights off the ground, and grunting and that. Anyway, I'm thankful for so much. I'm thankful for those mountain-top experiences. I also know, if you stick around with God long enough, you're going to go through the valleys. It sounds crazy, because I'm so thankful for the times that I go through the valleys, because it draws me closer to God. You know our flesh doesn't feel like it, Parrish, you feel overwhelmed, you feel sadness breaking out, but those are the times when you draw close to God. And you know there's going to be those mountain-top experiences again. You just have to be steadfast and nice and steady, you know? Don't get down when you go through the valley, and don't get too up when you go through the mountain-top experiences, you know? God's like, "Hey, child, I love you, and I want to give you glory and that," but I think a lot of the things that I'm thankful for, I'm thankful for what I don't have. I'm thankful for not having diseases and maybe major amounts of debt, you know, because I had desires to have all these great things that look good to the eyes, you know, I'm thankful that I don't have... It goes back to what Andy said last week, "We have not because we ask not," (James 4:2) "Ye ask, and ye do not receive, because ye ask to consume upon your own lusts," (James 4:3), you know, and there are a lot of things that I had asked... There's an old country song that says, "I thank God for unanswered prayers." God answers our prayers, He just says no. You look back at it, and it's like, "Thank God He said no." What I thought I wanted at the time, it wasn't good for me spiritually.

I'm glad to see you, Jay. I hope your family in Iowa is doing great. Nothing else matters, what we accomplish in this life, unless we enter into Heaven. Nothing else matters. I'm thankful for, you know just looking back, being unemployed for a decent amount of time, having a job... I'm able to collect a paycheck that meets my needs, but I also interact with people, you know? I've had opportunity to go to school; my grades aren't the best, but I'm passing. The guys help

me get through, and Sister Becky, she's not letting me give up. "Country, you better not give up." "Yes, ma'am." I'm thankful just to be able to meet and talk to people, you know? Parrish, when you asked me to share what I'm thankful for, I was like, "Heck, no problem," you know? Now, I look in front of me, I've got my hands, I've got my feet... So, and I'd like to thank you, too. "Be thankful for the little things," Parrish says. What in the world is a little thing? I mean, come on, now, those are some big things. You don't know what you've got until it's gone, you know? It all goes back to that valuable toe. You don't know how valuable a toe is until you stub it. Unh! But, anyway, Parrish, thank you for the opportunity and I just want to say that I'm thankful for all of you, my family that God's given me, as the Father of this family. I'm very thankful for it, and God bless you! I look forward to singing Christmas songs together. Thank you.

So, obviously, I'm not going to take as long as I normally take, because so much of the message has already been preached. Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen. But if I could share a thought; if I could share a thought, but of course I'm going to share a thought. I could share a thought: You know, we, as a ministry, we have been really blessed. It seems like every time you turn around this month, you talk about being thankful. Christians know, when they get down to it, Christians, they know how to thank God. Did you ever listen to a Christian really being thankful for something that God's done? You hear, and it's like, "Ooh, something happened," because they really know how to thank God. You know, at this particular time, we have had such a wonderful opportunity, this thanksgiving outreach, Phil, that you were talking about, Sister Mary O. started some years ago, and, we had so many people out, but the attitude. So many people stopped by, and they were going to have their own Thanksgiving meal, but they said, "You know, I want to bring an offering unto the Lord, first. I want to show people that my heart is here; I have some things that I have to do, but I'm showing you that we are connected." Beautiful spirit; beautiful attitude; so many people did that. It was not lost on a single recruit, a single person that was there, or even some of the guests and the visitor that came by. Not lost on any of them. If you could have heard, just the comments at the end of the day as they expressed—it was a time like no other for them, and they wanted to say, it even surpassed the Thanksgivings that they had had before. They thought it was going to be a homey thing with good food and everything, but the presence that people brought there in love and community was something truly precious.

So, we've had a wonderful month, and if we could just do a quick review: we've had a month of blessings. The first message, of course, was on, "What Part Does Thankfulness Have On Our Walk with God?" We related the part that we've got to make sure that we don't fall into the trap of unthankfulness. We also went on to say that we want to make sure that we don't give God a casual thank you for a ritzy or a walls-knocking-down-Jericho or a slaying-of-the-giant blessing. We want to give an appropriate thank you to match the blessing that God gives us. Then, the next message, Brother Jesse, he preached on being thankful brings us the victory. His points were that the battle belongs to the Lord, and being thankful in the difficult times, and, being thankful means to have the right perspective. Then, Brother Chris, he shared about thankfulness and memorial, and he shared thankfulness is not a sign of weakness. Not a sign of weakness. Being thankful in God never gets old, and being thankful does require an effort. Brother Andy reached last week on how do we show our thankfulness? How do we show our thankfulness?

This morning, I'd like to add a little something that we rarely talk about. It's rarely addressed, even though it exists quite well in our world today. If I had time, I would talk about why we really love acknowledgement. If you do something, you want to be acknowledged for it. You want that to be talked about. If we had time, and, of course, we don't have time, we would talk about where that comes from, where that started, and how, being acknowledged so many times, that signifies a worth. You know, when somebody acknowledges something that you've done, it places a value on it. If we had a little bit more time, we would talk about how that spirit, that oft-times, we see that people get accolades for what they do; you know, they get a trophy, or a medal, or whatever. Or they bring them up, and somebody pats

them on the back. It's a whole thing of loving, it's so bad; it's so bad in the word today that, when you see a whole bunch of people getting it, and, the thing is, you kind wish, sometimes, it was you. "I could do that! I could train, I could show, I could do that, and I could get those accolades," and where that all started, and how, sometimes, it even leads over into a little bit of jealousy. That all had a beginning, when the very first one, who saw the One who got all the glory, and all the magnificence, said, "I will be like the Most High." The very first one, where that spirit comes from. But, again, we'll have to make that a message for another day.

Some people—our message is, some people know that being thankful means having a connection. That, when you're thankful for things, you acknowledge that there's some kind of a connection. There's some act, or some benefit that you are the recipient of, and that, oft-times, these are things that you are not able to do for yourself. Depending on who it came from, if you like the person that acknowledges your—that gets you something and you benefit by it, if you like that person then that's a good thing for you. You're like, "Hey, I really appreciate you doing that for me, and I'm getting this, and this whole thing is really just hunky-dory. You know, that's kind of nice; it's rosy and peachy." But, if you don't like them, and they did something for you, then it's, "Argh. &\$%\$&*%#\$. I'm in a conflict. I kind of wanted to shout at you. I kind of wish you hadn't... I'm conflicted." If you don't like the person. Because, when somebody does something for you—still talking about being thankful—when somebody does something for you, it leads to a reciprocal. So often, it leads to a feeling of beholding. "Now that you have done something for me, I owe you." So often, people want to hurry up and do something back for the other person so, "Now I don't owe you nothing. We're even. Hah!" You know, in the movie, 'The Godfather,' they would go up to Marlon Brando, and they would come and ask him to do for them, something that they couldn't do themselves. So, he would do something for them, and they would come and give thanks, and he would do his old godfather thing, "You don't have to thank me now, but there will come a day that I will come to you, and I will ask you a favor. Whatever I ask, that you will do." The whole feeling of beholdenment. The whole feeling of, "Well, now that I am beholding to you," now you can add, "You have the power to do something about that." You have the power. This sort of feeling has not been lot on the world for two thousand years. You see, it's been associated with so many things. But, it's epic, its epoch was when, two thousand years ago, when the Lord—the Bible says that God sent His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). That's something that was a gift that was given; how can you repay it? How can you give back? "Oh, God, we'll never be even. You'll do something for me I could never do for myself." So, the flesh takes that same reciprocal spirit. So often, there's the question of the grace, and the mercy, and the blessings, and the longsuffering of God, but the tangible-ness of God sending His only begotten Son for us, to shed blood, to hang up, to die, and to go into the grave, and then on the third day be risen, and say, "All hail." The proof, as they say, is in the pudding. Now, that beholdenment that people say that they have towards God. "If we sum his up, I really need to thank God for that, but if I thank God for that, that means that I acknowledge that He did something for me. If I acknowledge that He did something for me, then that means that there is a connection. We have a relationship, there's something between us. If there's something between us, then there's obligation. Everybody knows that, with relationships, there's accountability. There's accountability with relationship." So often, the world says, "In order for me to escape being accountable to God, I need to escape that relationship with God. So, to escape that relationship with God, I need to see if I can escape that blessing from God." Two thousand years; two thousand years; two thousand years, people tried—the flesh—not everybody, of course not everybody, because the Bible says, "Behold, I lifted up my eyes and, lo, there was a number that was above every number." (Revelation 7:9) Of course it's not everybody. Of course, Apostle John said, "Who are they?" and the angel said, "Sir, thou knowest. These are they that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of that Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, day and night." (Revelation 7:13-15) So, it's not everybody, but in the flesh, in the deception, in the world, it would have to say, "Man, if I

acknowledge what God has done for me, there's a connection, and I don't want that connection, because if I have that connection, then I have a relationship, and if I have that relationship, I have that accountability, and if I have that accountability, then I need to be accountable, I need to do something, I need to be in the presence of God, and I need to escape that blessing."

So, this all comes down, quite simply, to what is the title of the message today: Fear of being blessed. And I'm almost done. Now, we see that the—if we look at our scripture for today; our scripture for today is from the Book of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

Now we see that the thoughts of the Lord toward us are peace, that we might end up—an expected end—end up with what God wants us to have. To end up—His thoughts of peace, that He might give us—that we might have, that we might receive, what God wants us to have. Oh, how beautiful. Oh, how beautiful. But, smart people, smart people, say, "You know, but Lord, if You, *this*, then I have to, *that*." Smart people. Smart people. But, wise people, wise people say, "God, when You do this, then I will do that. You will enable me to do more. You will give me the blessings that I will take it out, and we will grow relationship. That whole accountability is a negative thing—You're keeping me on the straight and narrow. You're keeping me on the path of blessings, and righteousness. God, You're keeping me on a path that's going to be doing me some right." That whole accountability—wise people see, "God, You are providing that lamp for my feet, and that light for my pathway."

So, that whole conflict; that whole allegory thing... That whole, "Do I want to be blessed of God, or do I not?" That whole thing, Christians can easily sum that up. In fact, we've been able to sum it up for the last two thousand years, with the compelling of Apostle Paul, or the compelling of Apostle Peter, the compelling of the disciples, down through the ages. The Lord even told us to watch: "Now is the time, for today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Even David said, "This is the day that the Lord has made." (Psalms 118:24) So, the fact is, it's time for Christians, in the world today, to not look at the negative and things that they don't have, but to be able to let up their eyes to the hills, from whence cometh their help (Psalms 121:1) and say, "God, I am not afraid for You to bless me. God, I'm not afraid for You to pour it out. Oh, Lamb of God, shower down on me. God, fill me. Lord, use me. Enter me into Your service, God. Oh, great King, I will take what You have for me." It's time for Christians in the world today to say, "This is my reward. This is my heritage. I don't have God's name in vain. I got it for a purpose. God wants me to have more; then He can use me more. Then I can lift up my eyes, and say, 'You know, neither death, nor life, nor any principality, or powers that come, nor things that be; nothing is able to separate me from You, God.' (Romans 8:38-39) I can say, as Job said, you know, 'I have esteemed the Words of His lips, so precious, I'd rather have His Word, than my necessary food (Job 23:12).' And he turned around and said, 'All the days of my appointed time shall I wait, until I know something's going to happen, until my great blessing, until my change comes (Job 14:14).'" So, it's time for Christians all over the world to say, "I won't say no to You, God. I will receive Your blessing. I will walk in Your ways. Lord, teach me Your ways. God, You've got so much more love for me; I've been settling, God. I've been only fractioning this thing out. I've been receiving it by measure, because I've only been opening myself up like a doggone thimble. God, make me a freeway! Pour it in, Lord, I want You to make me bust! I want to get a little lost in Jesus! I don't care if they don't understand. I don't care if they're amazed; let them mock me. Let them make fun of me. Let them just point, and say, 'Yes, he's that guy!' and God, let Your light be as the brightness of the new day. Lord, God, Almighty, and, yes, Lord, I thank You for every blessing You give me! Shut up, devil! Get behind; me and God got something going on, here! Yes, Lord."

And, finally, finally, you know you're never going to get a blessing and be the same. Let's just call it out. They say that the thing that people are most resistant to—I am closing—but they say the thing that

people are most resistant to is change. “I do not like change. I like to find my little cubby-hole and snooker in it—anything else that you bring me, as long as it’s outside my little cubby-hole, I get to decide whether I want to bring it in or not. If I don’t want to bring it in, Enh, enh, enh!” You know, I’ve had the privilege of going to different countries; I’ve been to twenty-four countries in my life. It is the same; not one single culture out there wants to change. Not a one of them. They all think their culture—what do I mean, ‘they?’ We all think our culture is the best. “My culture! My culture! Don’t be changing it; this is my culture! Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine!” But, you know, when God comes in, he’s going to bring that agent of change. You have to be willing to say, “Lord, I know that Your blessing is going to affect me. Lord, I know it’s going to make me different. God, I know it’s going to change me. Bless me anyway, God; bless me anyway.”

My last Scripture—our last Scripture for the message today, is from the Book of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:3 *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

From our point of view, we see one thing, but from God’s point of view, this whole thing is all about love. “If I could draw my people closer to Me, because I love them. If I could allow Myself to give them more, because I love them. If I could just have some more audience with them, because I love them. I don’t just love them with that ‘one day’ type of love; that, ‘I’ll love you as long as you give me a hamburger and cheese sandwich; I’ll love you as long as you give me onion rings and cheese fries. I’ll love you as long as you give me some banana pudding.” Well, I don’t know about that one. “I’ll love you just as long as...” No, God says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. That love that you got going on between you and your folks; that’s good love, but that don’t compare to My love. That love that you got going on between you and your wife and your children; that’s good love, but that don’t compare to My love. That love that you have for your vehicle, and your job, and, you know, you should love the things that God blesses you with, but that don’t compare to My love that I have for you. The love that I have for you is an everlasting love. It’s an everlasting love. The love that I have for you, it’ll wrap you up. The love that I have for you, it’ll hold you with the best hug you ever felt. The love that I have for you, it’ll fill you up on the inside. The love that I have for you, you don’t have to describe it to get the full effect. The love that I have for you won’t leave you hanging. The love that I have for you will bring you to Me; just loving kindness. I draw you to Me, saith the Lord.”