

The Subtle Forsaking of God
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February 12, 2017

Well thank you, thank you, Sandra. Time is valuable here so, thank you. It's great to be back here again.

We did take six months when we didn't attend the church at all. And four of those months we were actually in England. Hilary's parents and step-parents - I have four in-laws, you see – but they all have different challenges and needs and we spent some time there helping them and will continue to do that from time to time. We will be straddling both places.

But also the privilege of ministering in different areas as well, and we thank any of you who might pray for us in the process of doing that.

Some people have commented to me on my hair. We stayed in a haunted apartment in England and ...no this is the natural me. I deceived you for, oh I don't know, at least 25 years where I colored it a little bit. But Hilary likes this, so it's in my interest to stay this way now.

Those of you who are interested in our family, just very briefly, Hannah and Farsam, our eldest daughter and her husband, their two children are in South Africa. They went for a year to work with Hands at Work initially, but they are going to stay long-term.

They will be coming back this summer for five weeks I think it is and then going back long-term to serve with that very wonderful mission. We send teams from here to Zimbabwe to work with Hands at Work. And they are finding their role, their niche there.

Laura and Volara, our second daughter and her husband, are expecting twin boys in April. So that's a new experience for all of us. None of us have twins in our family, so that'll be fun.

Matthew, our adventurous son, is right now flying up in the Arctic with a medivac – it's like an air ambulance. And actually the last three days he has been stuck in a very freezing remote area when something on the plane broke. So he is saying he has to wake up – he and his colleagues have to wake up every three hours to re-, I don't know, fuel the generator to keep them warm to stop them from freezing to death.

He has got a beard which is frozen in some state, so he is having fun up there and hopefully rescuing folks who otherwise would not have access to the kind of medical attention that they need.

So that's just so that we are up to day on what's happened in our family.

Now if you have your Bible I am going to read to you from the book of Jeremiah and Chapter 2. I am going to be here for two Sundays – this week and next week – and I am going to speak on both occasions from this same passage.

I am going to read to you the first 13 verses this morning.

Jeremiah Chapter 2:

“The word of the LORD came to me:

“Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem these words: ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown.

“‘Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest; all you devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,’ declares the LORD.

“‘Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, all you clans of the house of Israel.’

“This is what the LORD says: ‘What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

“‘They did not ask, “Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?”’

“‘I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came in and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.

“‘The priests did not ask, “Where is the LORD?”’ Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.

“‘Therefore I bring charges against you again,’ declares the LORD. ‘And I will bring charges against your children’s children.

“‘Cross over to the coasts of Kittim and look, send to Kedar and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this;

“‘Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.

“‘Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror,’ declares the LORD.

“‘My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.’”

That’s as far as I am going to read.

No living cell can survive on its own. It needs a source of energy to enable it to perform its basic functions and stay alive and to grow and to move and to repair itself.

Plants need sunshine and air and water. Human beings need oxygen and water and food and sleep to enable us to continue living.

Even mechanical things need some outside source of energy and power. These lights don't just self-exist; they are connected to a source of energy.

This microphone that I have has a source of energy to equip it to work because nothing stands alone without the need for some external energy to enable it to function.

That is equally true of our spiritual lives. We are not just physical. We don't just get by like a cat gets by. If it's in the routine, it gets its food, it gets its sleep, everything is going to be okay; it doesn't have any crisis of identity or any crisis of meaning.

But human beings do, because we are spiritual beings. We need so much more than just food on our table, a bed to sleep in, water to drink.

And it is the appetites and longings of our hearts that we follow after to make sense of our lives.

But spiritual life has to be energized by something outside of ourselves. We are not self-contained and that source of that energy can be true and good or it can be false and bad, both of which are talked about in this passage.

C.S. Lewis, who wrote a book called *Mere Christianity*, which was a series of radio talks he gave during the war (this is now 70 years ago I guess), but he wrote in that book. He was a professor at Oxford University, you remember, and wrote the Narnia series.

But in this book *Mere Christianity* he says,

“God made us or invented us as a man may invent an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline and it will not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He, Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about Him. God cannot give us a happiness or a peace apart from Himself because it is simply not there. That is the way He made us.”

Jeremiah, in these verses, addresses a problem with the people of God where they had begun to look outside of God for some of their fundamental needs to be met. And he sums it up in Verse 13, the last verse I read, where God says to Jeremiah:

“My people have committed two sins:”

Number one:

“They have forsaken me, the spring of living water,”

And Number two:

“They have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

In forsaking God as their source, they have inevitably dug other cisterns, but He describes those cisterns, whatever they may actually be, all in common being broken, leaking, and leaving you drained.

Now I want to look over these two Sundays that I have the privilege of being here, to look first of all at the first of those two sins,

“They have forsaken me, the spring of living water”

And then next week, the second one – what does He mean when He says there,

“They have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water”?

Now regarding then this first accusation, “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me the spring of living water,” I want to ask two questions this morning.

What does it mean to forsake God? That’s the first question.

What does it mean to forego the spring of living water? That is the second question.

First of all then what does it mean to forsake God? He doesn’t say they have stopped believing in God.

The nation of Israel continued to believe in God. You ask any Israelite, “Who is your God?” he will tell you. “What is your history with Him?” He will tell you.

They have not stopped believing in Him but He says, “They have forsaken Me,” which is actually a recurring theme in the book of Jeremiah. If you read Jeremiah through, you will find on numerous occasions He talks about the fact, “You have forsaken Me, You have forsaken God, you have forsaken the LORD.”

That word “forsaken, forsaken, forsaken” recurs right through this letter, right through this prophecy.

Now to have forsaken God is to have known Him already. That’s why he is not talking here about unbelievers forsaking God.

A man can forsake his wife but he cannot forsake a woman with whom he is not in relationship. By definition, to forsake is to have been connected, to have been in some kind of relationship.

And so he is talking about the people of God who have a history of God, who have experience of God and yet have drifted from God and come to this place where they have forsaken Him.

In the beginning of this chapter Jeremiah writes about the fact that the relationship that the Israelites had with God was very much like a marriage.

Back in Verse 1 and 2 of Jeremiah 2:

“The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown.”’

He speaks of Israel being His bride, that their relationship was a romance. And God had taken Israel into Canaan, not just to enjoy all the benefits of a land flowing with milk and honey, though of course that was tremendous for them in the light of the fact they had been living those years in slavery in Egypt before that. But God’s primary purpose in taking the Israelites into Canaan was to bring them to Himself.

He said that in the book of Exodus to Moses.

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt (Exodus 19:4), how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Notice that God says there, “I brought it to Myself, to be My treasured possession, You will be for Me.”

The land is secondary, the location is secondary. “The primary purpose is that you come to Me, for Me, for an active living relationship for Me,” where God Himself is a beneficiary and the people of God, of course, are beneficiaries.

And this of course is very similar to the New Testament description of what the Christian life is. We too are brought into a relationship with Himself.

In 2 Peter 1:3 Peter writes,

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

This knowledge is not mental; this knowledge is experiential. It is also the meaning of John 17:3 where Jesus said,

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Again, this “knowing You” is not simply mental; it is experiential because actually in that same discourse (Jesus was in the Upper Room in John 17); in John 14 on the same night, in the same location, Jesus said to one of His disciples, Philip – Jesus answered him in John 14:9,

“Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?”

Philip was fully acquainted with Jesus. He was a participant in all the ministry of Jesus. He had seen the miracles of Jesus. He had listened to all the teaching of Jesus. But Jesus said to him, “Do you not know Me, Philip, after so long?”

This knowing is not “would you recognize Him on the street” – of course he would – but “do you actually, experientially know Me” because it is that which is the essential nature of the Christian life and of eternal life, as Jesus described it there.

If you say to me, “Do you know the Queen?” I might answer, “Of course I do. She is the most famous woman, probably on the planet. Everybody knows the queen.”

But if you say, “But do you actually know her?” My answer is, “No, of course not. She hasn’t a clue I even exist.”

And you see there is knowledge of God, which is a belief in God, which is a theoretical, mental exercise that hasn’t become a living experiential relationship of knowing Him.

And as Israel was brought into a relationship of love and trust and dependence, described here in this passage as being like a bride being brought into a marriage, so we too are brought into a marriage relationship with Christ. It is one of the New Testament descriptions – describes the church as being the bride of Christ.

And that relationship with Him is the determining factor in whether we have adequate resources, adequate sources of energy and power outside of ourself to enable our spiritual life to be full and satisfying and at rest.

Sometimes when I have conducted a wedding I have talked about togetherness in marriage. These two people are coming now together to share a union that is one to which they are both committed.

And I say to them sometimes when I have done this, that there are two kinds of togetherness in a marriage.

There is a side-by-side togetherness where you are moving through life together, you have your objectives, you have your goals, you have your necessary obligations that you work through together.

There is a side-by-side togetherness, but there is also a face-to-face togetherness. And the face-to-face togetherness is not about going anywhere; it is about bringing into each other's life that love, that sharing that weakness and vulnerability that we all have, affirming each other, feeding into each other's hearts. And it is exclusive and private and it's just between the two of you, and it's face-to-face.

But the problem may be, I say to them, in your marriage that you are so taken up with the side-by-side togetherness - you are busy, you have jobs, you may have a family, you may have a house you have to look after, there are things that need maintaining and the pressure is on you from sun-up to sun-down, seven days a week you are busy, busy, busy that you have no time for the face-to-face dimension.

You may take a sideways glance at each other from time to time and greet each other on the busyness of your lives, but not alone with that time to enjoy that face-to-face nurturing of our souls by one another.

And that is exactly what has happened to Israel. Their relationship with God, like marriage, so easily, has deteriorated into a business partnership.

And so having said, "They have forsaken Me, the spring of living water," in Verse 27 of this chapter, which we didn't read earlier, he says,

"They have turned their backs to me and not their faces."

Their face-to-face relationship has become a back-to-back relationship, which now lacks the intimacy and the communication and the communion and the oneness that is depicted in the face-to-face relationship.

Now it never starts that way. On a wedding day they will think, "Oh well, thanks for that advice, but we won't need that."

You see here is the sequence in Chapter 2 and Verse 1:

"The word of the LORD came to me: 'Son, go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: 'I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land now sown.'"

They loved Him; He loved them. They were the bride; He was the bridegroom. He says, "We had a great honeymoon. I remember the love that we had and that I received from you," God is saying.

But they settled down into a business partnership where God's primary value to them was that He was the supplier of their needs. He enabled them to live freely and not in an intimate relationship of love and trust. And that left them hungry in their souls. And they began to seek other sources and satisfying that hunger.

We will talk about those next week because that's the second thing he says, "You have dug out other cisterns." Cisterns are simply tanks – they are static water but they leak and they have never met those deep needs of your heart.

They could look back with a great testimony but it had petered out. I wonder if that may be true for some of us here today. You look back on the beginning of your relationship with God and it was something real that God did in your life.

Paul talks in Romans 5 about God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us, and you may look back and remember times when you knew that you were loved by God because the Holy Spirit shed abroad in your heart, as Paul puts it, the love of God.

You may look back and remember what Paul says in Romans 8:15 that we have received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' That intimate calling out to a father, Abba, in Hebrew.

And maybe you remember days when you felt that closeness to Him. Romans 8:16 says,

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

With the Spirit of God in my heart, I just know that something is happening and something has happened. He bears witness I belong to Him.

And these three assurances told us three things from God.

First of all, "I love you." God has poured out His love into our hearts.

"You are Mine." He gave us the Spirit of sonship. We cry, "Abba, Father." "You are Mine; you are My child."

And "I delight in you." The Spirit Himself bears witness with us that we are children of God and He delights in us.

Remember when Jesus was baptized? The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."

Those same three things are there: "You are Mine; this is My Son whom I love (I love you), with whom I am well pleased (I delight in you)."

And by the way, Jesus hadn't done anything at that stage except live anonymously for 30 years in Nazareth as a brother, as a son, as a carpenter, as a neighbor. No miracles had been performed. No Sermon on the Mount had ever been preached, yet the Father said, "I delight in you," because it is not about what you do, but who you are.

And those three things: “You are Mine, I love you, I delight in you;” by the way I think every child needs to hear that from their parent.

I love you. You are mine. I delight in you.

And the Spirit of God brings those things into our hearts when we are born again of the Spirit.

But then in Deuteronomy 6 God says to the Israelites there that He did not bring them to Himself because they deserved it but just because He loved them.

He says there, Deuteronomy 7:7,

“The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

“But it was because the LORD loved you.”

[Vs. 9] “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is a faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.”

Their relationship was born in love, as our relationship is born in love. And this sense of being loved by God is part of the assurance of our salvation, of our relationship with God.

There are two primary levels of assurance that God is really present and at work in our lives. And both of them are necessary together.

One is objective, we might say; one is subjective.

The object assurance is what we receive by deduction from Scripture and what it teaches. So if somebody comes and is concerned as to whether they are a Christian or not, someone might say to them, “Well, do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?”

And he or she might say, “Yes, I do.”

“Well then,” they say, “let’s read to you a verse: John 3:16, ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.’”

And you say, “Do you believe that?”

And he says, “Yes, I do.”

“Well, there you are then. If you believe the Word of God to be true and the Word of God says if you believe you have eternal life, then if you believe, you are saved, you are secure. Don’t worry about your feelings,” you might say. “Believe the facts as given to us in the Word of God.”

And I have had that conversation many times with people in the course of my ministry.

But Christianity is more than simply resting on a legal document. It is right that our assurance is based on the Word of God, but there is a subjective assurance as well that is also necessary. It is this pouring out the love of God into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that Paul speaks of in Romans 5:5.

It is the Spirit himself testifying with our spirits that we are God's children, as Paul said in Romans 8:16, where something inside us comes alive and we know something has taken place. It is subjective, it is experiential; it is living.

It may express itself in different ways but there will be evidence. For myself, and I have probably told you this before, when I became a Christian at the age of 12 on a Saturday night at a youth event, I didn't know if I had really been saved or not. I had said, "Lord, I am not a Christian; would You please make me one."

I didn't know if anything happened, I didn't feel anything at all. But the next day was Sunday and I went to the church in the village that I lived in, that I had been to all my life, and I went there on Sunday morning. And for the first time the service made sense.

I went back on the Sunday night and the preacher was interesting. And I thought, "This is remarkable. These people have changed overnight. This used to be dull. I used to wait for the hour to pass (or hour and a half, we used to meet), wait for the hour and a half to pass.

And now suddenly I had an appetite I never had before and I knew 24 hours after I became a Christian that I had become a Christian, that something had happened, because something happened inside me that gave me an appetite I had not known before.

The Word of God is the objective evidence which we need; the Spirit of God is the subjective evidence. And we need both to live with assurance.

Now Israel had both and they knew what God had said about them. If you asked them, "Are you the people of God?" They would say, "Yes, we are."

But they had lost that inner subjective sense of His presence, of His love, of His working. They had known this.

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown."

Now the wilderness years were not all glory days as we know, looking back at the Old Testament record of them, but in the wilderness, He said, "You loved Me, you trusted Me, you put your lives in My care," God says. He had provided for them. He had led them. He had given them water from the rock at Horeb. He had fed them with manna. He had protected them. Do you remember all of that?

“Yet...”

In Verse 32 of Jeremiah 2 He says,

“Does a maiden forget her jewelry, or a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.”

“They have forgotten Me,” says God. “They have forgotten the wedding, they have forgotten the jewelry. They have forgotten the love. They have forgotten their relationship.”

It does not mean they didn’t know they were the people of God, but they had lost the reality and the intimacy and the joy of that.

And they were in business with God but they were not in a love relationship with God.

I told you this on one occasion several years ago, but some time ago, I was going through a difficult time. Battles were raging in my soul. I was weak, defeated.

And one day Hilary asked me the question, “Is Jesus your friend?”

And I thought about that. And I thought about the fact that I work with Him. Most of my dealings are with Him or about Him or they are about His Word or they are about knowing His mind. They are about knowing His will; they are about wanting His power.

And I came to a sober conclusion that Jesus was my business partner first and not my friend.

And she said to the effect, “I can see that. Let Him be your friend.”

And it became a vitally important and significant challenge and issue in my life.

We can function out of obedience to God.

Those of us who are in Christian ministry, you know – you know it’s the easiest place to backslide, because it’s your job? And yet your heart can be distant.

We can acknowledge His presence; you and I can do that. We can metaphorically tip our hat to Him and say, “Yes, thank You You’re there – we know You are there; I want You to bless me,” but not live out of a daily fresh love relationship with Him.

What does it mean to be a friend of Jesus? In John 15:15 Jesus said to His disciples,

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

So now here you know He is Your friend – He talks to you.

“You are not just My servants, because servants don’t know their master’s business; they just get on with whatever they are supposed to do. But a friend shares his heart. And He says, “Because I have spoken to you.”

And you have become familiar with His voice.

As Jesus said in John 10 when He talked about being the Good Shepherd, “I know My sheep and My sheep know Me. My sheep listen to My voice. I know them and they know Me and they follow Me.”

We know the voice of the Shepherd. And in all the voices that come into our lives; we know the voice of Jesus.

In Exodus 33:11 it says,

“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”

Back to that face to face metaphor again, and He talks – He talks to His friend.

When Jesus said He would call His disciples His friends in John 15, He had just been talking to them about the relationship that they could have with Him. He had just said to them,

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

And some translations – in fact, most translations – put the word “abide” there.

“If a man abides in me and I abide in him, he will bear much fruit.”

To abide is to live, to be at home. “If a man is at home with Me and I am at home with him, he is going to bear fruit.”

What does it mean to abide in Christ? Well this same chapter, this same discourse tells us. Jesus said in Verse 7 of John 15,

“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it will be done for you.”

John 8:31:

“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.”

To abide in Christ is to abide in His Word, to live in His Word.

As C.H. Spurgeon, that famous preacher from the 19th Century wrote,

“Oh that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God and get that Word into ourselves. As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf and consume it, so ought we to do that with the Word of God. Not crawl all over its surface, but eat right into it and to have taken it into our innermost parts. It is idle merely to let the eye glance over the words or to recollect the poetical expressions or the historic facts, but it is blessed indeed to eat into the very soul of the Bible, and your very style is fashioned by Scripture and your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord.”

We cannot experientially abide in Christ without abiding in His Word. This is how He makes Himself known to us.

And the other thing Jesus said on the same occasion was in John 15:9:

“Abide in my love,” He said. “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

To abide in Christ is to abide in His love. That is to live in His love. If God has shed the love of God abroad in our hearts, it is to live, to abide, to be at home in the love of God.

Now some of us find that difficult because we don’t think we are loveable. And we are questioning and we are suspect about love. Probably we have good human reason for being so.

But you and I have the great privilege when we are brought into relationship with God of abiding in the fact that He loves us; because He loves us has nothing to do with what we do or don’t do. He loves us, and we live in His love.

And you will find a remarkable energy that comes from living in the love of God. So to abide in Christ is to be His friend. And to abide in Christ is to abide in His Word and abide in His love.

And when we neglect and forsake God in that way, what do we lose? Well He says back in Chapter 2:13 [Jeremiah],

“They have forsaken me, the spring of living water.”

Which leads me to my second point, but don’t worry, it’s not as long as the first point; I am going to just wrap it up very quickly, but it is important.

What does it mean to forego the spring of living water?

We ask, what does it mean to forsake God? The result of that is you have forsaken the spring of living water – what does that mean to forego the spring of living water?

This is a beautiful picture. God pictures Himself like a spring of water. And a spring is primarily fresh and pure.

When I was a boy, the house we lived in was fed by a spring that came out of a hillside about half a mile or so away from our house. And the spring fed just two houses. We lived out in the country.

And that water never ran out and that water was always fresh.

When Jesus met with the woman of Samaria, He used the same image. He said,

“For everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Jesus recognized this woman was thirsty. She was drinking water that did not satisfy. We don't know much about her but she had five husbands. She was now living with a man to whom she was not married. Why? Because she was thirsty – that's why.

And she was looking to find that thirst satisfied in love, or in romance or in marriage or in sex or possibly in children. And every time the water ran out and she would be thirsty again; now she just lives with a man, dispenses with the formalities and the costs of a wedding. Not because she was wicked but because she was hungry, thirsty.

And when people are in touch with their thirst, they will drink from any source to find satisfaction. They will drink dirty water because they know they need to be satisfied. And this woman was on a search and Jesus said, “If you drink the water I give you, you will discover you will never thirst again. Why? Because the water will be in you like a well, and a well is always deep. It will go deep into your life and deep into your heart.

And a spring is always fresh. It will be like a spring bubbling up that goes on meeting your need.

It is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We don't live on stale experience of God; we live on a daily fresh experience of Himself.

A man came to me one day and said, “Will you pray for me that God will give me back what I had 15 years ago?”

I said, “What are you talking about?”

He said, “I used to be a Christian. I used to walk with God. I had a great relationship with God. But,” he said “I went away from God for 13 years – turned my back and went completely away.”

And then he said, “Two years ago my cousin was killed in a road accident. I went to his funeral and he was a wonderful Christian and people talked about his life and they talked about the kind of man that he was. And I knew in my heart I needed to know God the way that He did. So I came back to God and for two years I have said, ‘Lord, please give me back what I had 15 years ago’ and He hasn't.”

And I said, “Well, maybe God isn’t interested in giving you back what you had 15 years ago. His mercies, Scripture tells us, are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness. Why don’t you ask Him to give you today what He has for you today? Why not live today on the resources He has for you today? And if it has anything to do with what you experienced 15 years ago, well and good; if it doesn’t, well and good.”

God is not interested in re-creating something that is 15 years past.

And so it is with us. When we lose our freshness with God, when our relationship disintegrates, when we are no longer His friend, what happens is exactly what God said to Jeremiah would happen:

“My people committed two sins:”

One:

“They have forsaken me, the spring of living water,”

And two:

“They have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

And you know when you are digging into broken cisterns because they leak and you are constantly drained.

And we are going to talk about that next week, what some of these broken cisterns are. There are some of them listed in this chapter.

Let me finish by asking you this: how is your relationship with God? Are you in one at all? Maybe you don’t have a relationship with God and you can come to Him this morning and confess to Him your need and your sin and say, “Thank You Lord Jesus, You died for me, You took my sin to the cross and You rose again to come and live within me.”

And you invite Him to do so and thank Him for His willingness to do so. And receive Him into your life.

But maybe there are those of us and you are in a relationship with God, but it has become dry and you find yourself drawing on broken cisterns that never last. And I say to you, will you come back to Him too and will you begin to be His friend and let Him be a friend and have that face to face relationship where you abide in Him and you abide in His Word and you abide in His love? Because that is His longing for you, for one reason: He loves you, He loves you.

Let’s pray.

Our Father, we are so grateful to You this morning that You are alive and You are present. We are not talking about an ancient truth and an ancient book; we are talking about a living God who wants to fellowship with us today.

And I pray, Lord, for any here this morning who do not have a relationship with You, that You will bring them into that relationship that they know because they experience the love of God and the Spirit of God in their hearts and they become new people.

And there are those of us who have drifted – and it is so easy to drift, Lord, I confess to You; it is so easy to drift. Bring us back again we pray and keep us fresh, drawing on that fresh supply of Your presence in us, of Your Word to us, of Your love.