

Are We Really Ready for Revival?

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As transcribed by Jane Vaughn

Exodus 19:3-12

3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. 8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.

9 And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the Lord. 10 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

19:16-20

16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. 20 Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Exodus 20:18-21

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." 20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

When this portion of the scripture is read aloud, I love to listen to the responses from the audience – when they are truly listening. I trust you have paid attention in the reading and were imagining the action that had to accompany this divine and supernatural event as it was originally presented by God to the Israelites in the wilderness. Extraordinary happenings! Undeniably God!

We're going to walk through these scripture verses together, and I want to help you answer the question I'm about to ask. Here's the question: *Are we really **ready** for Revival?*

It's one thing for us to get together in the church as we do time after time and listen as a pastor speaks on the subject of Revival. Our heart's response usually is: "Oh, Lord, send Revival! Send Revival!" I remember growing up in my Daddy's church where we used to sing: "Lord send a revival – and let it begin in me." And we meant that with all our hearts. Yet, I suppose each one of us had and has today a different concept of that word – Revival.

It's quite another thing when we are actually confronted with the power and awesome presence of God! So – what is Revival? I mean, *exactly*, what is it?

If you look up the word in a dictionary, you would find mentioned “reigniting or bringing back to life something that was lifeless.” But I believe *Revival* might be defined more accurately like this: *Revival is the Holy Spirit – showing off God – His way.* Isn’t that good? You think about it.

The next question has to be: What does it take to get us ready for Revival?

The first thing that I note from our passage and its context would be: Remember God’s goodness.

When God began to talk to the people through Moses, He said, “Moses, I want you to tell the people – *Remember.* You saw the things I did to the Egyptians, and how I made a way for you through the Sea. Now, remember that” (cf.Ex.19:4).

Oh, Church – if I took this microphone and roamed among this congregation and said, “Just tell me, Sir, Lady, one thing God has done for you. Can you remember your path? How did He pick you up? How did He make a way for you?” Each one of us has a story.

I know we each have a story to tell, but unfortunately we tend to forget “The story.” We forget the times that the enemy was right on our heels and there was no other way to go and God just absolutely stopped him in his tracks, opened the path before us, we walked on through – and then took the credit for it! Oh, so sad. “I did this and this and this and the victory was mine!”

God says, “*I* did that! *I’m* the One that gave you that job. I’m the One that gave you that mate. I’m the One that made a way for you. I’m the One that destroyed your enemy. You need to *remember* Me,” says God. It’s important that we remember the good things God has done for us.

I miss testimonies. Do some of you miss those times in the services? In the old days, someone would just pop up from the pew and testify to something wonderful God had done in their lives. We used to call them popcorn testimonies – until we had so many “old maids.” ☺ You know what those are... duds. ☺

The idea was good, however – because we would be encouraged by one another as each would stand and report, “Oh, just this week, the Lord did a miracle for me!” Then someone else would stand and say, “I was healed this morning as I read the Word.” And so, on went the testimony time. Sometimes we were thrilled like that for the whole service – just one testimony after another.

We need to do that to ourselves! Remember – and rejoice. That’s part of what David did when he “*encouraged himself in the Lord*” (1Sam.30:6). Things weren’t so good for David at that time. In fact, they were bad for him. But he began to *remember*: “Oh, yes, my Lord. You have brought me a long way! Oh, yeah. I remember the days in the cave and You got me out of that! Oh, Lord! I know You’re not going to fail me now!” That’s encouraging self-talk – and we need to remember – to remind ourselves. We need to learn to do that, Church, if we’re going to get ready for Revival!

The second point I want to make is to: Remember God’s direction. He says, “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you’ll be a special treasure to Me” (Ex.19:5). If you will indeed obey.

Now, I looked at that verse and thought, “God, why’d You say it like that?” I wondered because these people... Well, they’re like us when we answer our altar calls. “Whatever You want, Lord! Hallelujah!” They could even sing with us: “I’m Yours, Lord! Everything I am...” Their response – and ours – was: “Take over Holy Spirit – have Your own way! Do whatever....” And we really mean that – then – at the moment!

But when we get in the car to go home and the Lord says, “If you will *indeed*....” Or, may I say it like this? “If you’ll *really* do what you just said....”

That’s what God is saying to us today: “If you will *indeed* – obey My Word and keep My covenant. If you’ll *really* follow My direction.... You have no idea how that will pan out – but you will be a special *treasure* to Me” – listen now – “*above all people*.”

How glibly we declare: “We’re *the head and not the tail*” (Dt.28:13). How glibly we say, “We’re the people of God. *We* are praying for His Kingdom to come. *We* – we have power.” Or, “*Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world*” (cf.1Jn.4:4). We’re so quick to quote scriptures that boost our ego for the moment. And yet God says, “I’m looking for a people who will really do it – who’ll really keep what they say they’ll do!”

Part 2

The third thing we can note here is: Remember God’s calling. “*You shall be to Me...*” this scripture said, “*a kingdom of priests and a holy – **holy** – nation*.” (Ex.19:6). Do you know what the word *holy* means? In simple terms, it simply means “other than” – or, “set apart” – or, not like the others; separated from; something different from the rest.

And so I ask – why do you spend all your time trying to be like others when the Lord said, “No, you don’t get it! *I* look at you as a holy nation; a holy people. You are priests to Me! It isn’t the same as the world. I don’t want to treat you the same as they are – because you’re not the same as they are. Don’t try so hard to be just like them.”

We try to reason it out: “Oh, well, that is such an exclusivist thing. That is such – uh – that’s a separatist thing. That’s a.... Oh, you should never say *that*.” I didn’t. ☺ I just quoted it. God said it! ☺

Basically He declared, “You’re going to swim upstream. You’re My people. You’re My – *kingdom of priests*. I want you to so represent Me on earth, that they can’t look at you and not see Me. They can’t hear you and not be hearing – Me. I want you to know that your voice is to be one with Mine. Your heart is to be one with My heart.”

Come on, Church. We need to hear this. We have to acquire a different view of things. We need to see things from the top down. Someone recently wrote a book: When Heaven Invades Earth (Bill Johnson). That’s what I’m talking about. When you get up above this scene or your circumstances and you look down, you see things differently. Scripture says we’re *seated with Him in heavenly places* (cf.Eph.2:6). We need to get His perspective.

I once told you about viewing the lights of a city and how God spoke to me at that time. I was on a high building looking down over the city-lights of Detroit. It was such an incredible sight. All kinds of lights – little tiny ones; flickering ones; big bold ones; brightly colored ones. There was even a searchlight making arcs of light over the sky. I just stood in awe looking at all this beauty when the Lord spoke to me. He said, “That’s how I see *My* city.” Some of you may only be flickering tonight, but you still look better than the darkness!

Number 4 – Remember your covenant. Here the people are gathered together and God makes a presentation to His servant: “Moses, tell the people. . . .”

Allow me to paraphrase the story from here. “Moses, tell the people I’ve heard their prayer (there at *your* church ☺). I am going to come and reveal Myself and they will know Revival. Tell them I’m on My

way. But you have to know that there are some things that I want you to know that you have to do in preparation for that.... You have to keep My covenant and keep My commandments.”

And all of us said (just like they did – Ex.19:8): “We will do it – we will. Just come – just.... O, God, just *come!* Whatever it takes!”

That reminds me of another old song of the church: “Whatever it takes for this will to break.” I know you remember some of those oldies too. But you see – *this* one is a dangerous song to sing! ☺

Have you ever been so desperate as to say, “Lord, I want You so much, I don’t care what it costs – I don’t care what You do with me – I’d even stomp on my pride. Lord, whatever it takes!” Have you ever been that desperate? Yes, I know you have! In service after service. And I too have been that desperate.

The Lord responds to those cries: “Alright. What will you do?” And all the people answered together: “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do – and we’ll even sign it.” ☺ It really is a hurtful thing to God for us to break covenant.

I hate being lied to. It’s almost a phobia with me. It’s even like a hang-up I have. Do you have that too? It is so belittling to me – to be lied to. Well, God hates it too. He would rather we not make a vow than to make it and break it. That is scripture that says that (Num.30:2; Eccl.5:4). Yet here the people are – all together saying, “O Moses, yes. Yes! We will do everything God has said!” (cf.Ex.19:8a).

Now, if He’s God and He *knows* that I’m *not* going to keep my promise – why does He keep His? Think about that. God is faithful – regardless of what I think or do. “*God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent*” (Num.23:19). He keeps covenant even when we don’t. And He continually says, “Okay, I’ll take you at your word. I hear that – I receive that – I’ll trust it.” (Ex.19:8b).

It’s almost frightening to me to know how much God trusts me. To think that He trusts me. I mean, I trust Him. Of course I trust Him. “Jesus – Jesus – precious Jesus! Oh for grace to trust You more!” Yes, I trust Him! But He says, “I trust *you*.” I want to cry out to Him: “Oh, please, don’t! ☺ I might not... I might... Oh, I might err in the way!”

Yes, He already knows that and I can hear Him respond: “I know you will. I know the path that you will take, but I love you with a love everlasting!” (Jer.31:3) Hallelujah! I said, “Hallelujah!!”

Further, He declares: “And there is nothing you can do that is too great for Me to fix!” (cf.Is.63:9). Oh! Hallelujah! We ought to *shout* with that good news! Because He is God Almighty!

That’s why He introduces himself as I AM! (Ex.3:14). He said to Moses: “I have a job for you – go.” “Oh, God, who shall I say sent me?” “*I AM.*” “I am - what? What’s Your last name?” ☺

God is saying to him: “Moses, I AM anything (and everything) you need. I AM everywhere you go. I AM sufficient – for every situation and every need of every life! There is no sinner too soiled with sin that I cannot redeem. Nothing! *Nothing* is able to get in the way.... ‘Shall life or death or principalities or...?’ There is NOTHING! Nothing can separate you from Me!” (Ro.8:35-39). Whoohhh! We must shout in celebration about that!

So – we made the commitment; now we go to the promise. He says, “I am coming!” All-right!! And the Lord says, “Now, Moses, tell them to be ready! Get ready. Clean yourselves up. Focus on Me. Quit thinking so much about yourself.”

If you're still trying to clean yourself up, I pity you – because it's really impossible. You cannot get clean enough for God's visitation. Oh, you can quit some habits (and should!) and put on new habits (good ones) and still not be clean enough for God's visitation. We just can't get there without His provision.

Everything we receive that is good, we receive from Him (Jas.1:17). The only thing in us that pleases God is Himself. The only good in me that God *sees* is what He sees of Himself in me. It is the righteousness of Christ (who lives in me) that qualifies me to be seen of the Father! (1Cor.1:30; 2Cor.5:21; Phil.3:9). Whatever degree of Him that lives within me – that's the degree that Iverna is pleasing to the Father!

So, if you're still looking in the mirror and just seeing *you* – what a mess! ☺ And then we're singing and begging Him – “Oh, Lord, I tried so hard. I really did. You know I did. Could you give me A for effort? B? I'll take a C.” ☺ And He declares the truth: “You don't get it, do you? You sang it tonight: ‘I'll never know how much it cost.’”

It's not about *you*. You were in Him – *then* – on the cross. You were *in Christ* – then – on the cross. Because He said, “I died for all. I died for all! I *died* for all!” (Rom.14:9; Heb.10:10,12).

The only thing that's left for you to do is accept the FACT of faith. Oh, do think about that. We have this idea that “faith” is something so intangible – even unreasonable. But – faith is. Faith has substance (cf.Heb.11:1). That's the *fact* of faith. Faith *is*. That is what enables us to say, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” It's the fact of faith.

Number 5 is: Remember to be ready. “Well, you just said we can't *get* ready.”

We do exactly what He said to Moses (Ex.19:10,11): consecrate ourselves; wash our clothes – and get ready for the third day. One – two – and the third day *He* arose. And the third day – *you* arose. And the third day is about to come – sooner than you know!

He's coming again, Church. He's coming back to this earth. Ohhhhh, yes! I mean – why do you think things are like they are? Person after person – we could all testify of the negatives hitting our lives today. That was only day two.

I love this! It's time to rejoice! Let your joy be renewed and overflow in your God and Savior! It's day two and a half now! ☺ Yes! Let your shouts of praise and victory be heard!

I think we've been beat up long enough. How many believe that with me? How many of you believe we're right on the *edge* of something *glorious* and *exciting*! I mean: He is on the way!! He is coming to His people! Remember to be ready!

Point 6 – I think of it like this. . . . How many of you ever played hide-n-seek? We would count to 10 or whatever and then yell – what? “Ready or not – here I come!”

This is too good! I'm enjoying this! We even sing it: “It makes me want to shout: Hallelujah! Thank You, Jesus!” What's so good? I hear Him saying that to us! ☺ “Ready or not. . . .”

You know, I'm just a simple girl. I believe He's saying this now: “Church – I've been telling you to get ready – and some of you are ready. I'm going to come for the some who are! So – Ready or not – Here I come!”

Part 3

“Then it came to pass on the third day in the morning there were – thunderings – and lightnings – and the thick cloud on the mountain – and the sound of the trumpet was very loud – (some of you wouldn’t stay for that! ☺) – so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God.” (Ex.19:16,17).

I assure you – that would preach for an hour. It’s not sufficient just to feel enough of God to make you tremble. You know, the “woo-woos” – “Ohhhhhhh! Wooohhh! Ohhhhhhh!” I grew up in that atmosphere – so I know all about it. It’s just not enough!

So – Moses went and got the people that were just in the camp – trembling. He told them, “You need to come out and meet the real thing. I want you to come out and meet God!” Oh, Church! Yes, we’ve seen the counterfeit. Now let’s put a period on that and look up for the real!

When God says He’s coming – “I will visit you! I am coming! I’m bringing Revival!” – we all get excited. But I wonder if we could handle what He does – when He comes? Think about this scripture. I mean, this is strange, Church. These are *strange* happenings – earthquakes and thunder and lightning and dense clouds – and the loud sounds of a trumpet! That’s pretty strange!

How would we handle that in a church service? What if someone jumped up and did something – strange? And it was God!? We’d lose half of you. ☺

But you see some of the people actually came out to meet God (vs.17). And when they did, they saw the top of Mt. Sinai completely engulfed in smoke – “because the Lord descended on it in fire” (vs.18). Fire!

Remember Acts 2:3: Fire! “as cloven tongues – of fire!” When God came (in the Book of Acts), the first thing He came in was fire! When the Holy Spirit was released to the Church, the first thing that came was not tongues. It was FIRE! The fire set upon their heads! It was fire!

Let me tell you, the fire of God is coming back to the Church. That doesn’t mean – listen to me now – it doesn’t mean just *enthusiasm*. We can get people going and enthused and so on, and then proudly report: “Oh, I’ll tell you, they were fired up!” No, they weren’t. They were “enthused up.” ☺ Music can do that. Clapping can do that. Stomping can do it. A “good” preacher can do it.

But when the fire of God, the real fire of God comes through His Word, or comes through a word, or comes by His Spirit, I want you to know the first thing it does is burn up anything burnable! Wood – hay – stubble – POOF!! ::POOF!!:: When the fire of God hits – all your good works go: POOF! And they’re gone!

The fire of God ignites! It ignites a dead man – ignites an inept woman. It allows wisdom to come to the top. It causes us to speak beyond our natural understanding. It makes a difference in lives – just because we touched them. That’s the Fire of God!

“Well, how do you know He’s coming in fire?” Because He is fire! “Our God is a consuming fire!” (Heb.12:29). And He’s going to come and consume all the dross. But then, He’s going to consume you.

Now, imagine it! It isn’t just the wood, hay and stubble of my life – my own works and ambitions and plans and dreams and all – that have to burn and fall at my feet as ashes. But the fire has to come to purify the gold He’s looking for inside us. Oh, hallelujah! Because He wants the gold so pure that when He looks down into it, His face is reflected – in me! And in you! (cf.Mal.3).

Moses is ready. When the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder – Moses spoke and God answered him by the voice (Ex.19:19). The people, however, are not ready. It’s one thing to be wishful – longing for an experience of His Presence, His touch. But it’s entirely another thing to be ready.

Listen to this again – we read it together earlier: (Ex.20:18). “*All the people witnessed – they saw it – the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, the mountain smoking;*” – they all saw all of this going on – ALL of the people witnessed the Presence . . . and they trembled. . . and “*stood afar off.*”

I have never seen a move of God where that wasn't true – and I've seen a few in my lifetime. There are always those people who enter right in – just like a Moses: “Ohhhhh, take me, Lord. Whatever! Your presence is so awesome! I want to see Your face.”

But there's another group that moves to the periphery thinking: “I'm gonna check this out. I'm not sure this is God.” Or maybe it's: “This is not what I bargained for – I wanted His *sweet, gentle presence.*” You can almost hear them singing it: “Peace – peace, wonderful peace. . . .”

And I've also watched a core of people try to stop the move of God.

But when God comes – listen – when God comes, God comes *His way*. Sometimes it is “*peace-peace*” with gentle tears and silence and quiescence. And when it happens that way, it's such a mighty move of God you wouldn't even sneeze if you had to. I've been in those kinds of services. At other times, it's the thunderings and the lightning of God. And it's still the awesome presence of God!

What I'm trying to explain to you is that if you're *really ready* for God, you don't care which way He comes! You will recognize it as God when it happens!

Moses said to the people, “Don't fear – don't be afraid – for God has come to *test* you” (vs.20). *Test* you? What's the test? Is it *endurance*? Or *tolerance*? Then you can hear the people say – almost with a distinct reticence – “Okay, Lord, *if this is You*, I'll watch and do it.”

Oh, no. Moses makes it very clear. “*God has come to test you that **His fear** may be before you – **so that you may not sin.***” (Ex.20:20, bold added).

That's not double talk. “Don't fear” – and “God's testing you so that you can – *fear.*” These are two different things altogether! Being *afraid of the move of God* will keep you outside of it. Having the “*fear of the Lord*” would prevent your leaving when He comes!

In the book, Two Minds, by Os Guinness – I like what he said about the fear of the Lord. “The fear of God in the believer draws him nearer; in the unbeliever drives him back. In the believer, it makes him search himself; in the unbeliever, he accuses God before he can be accused. In the believer, it makes him trust; in the unbeliever, it makes him frightened and suspicious. Right fear comes from faith; false fear comes from doubt. Some fear to lose Him and others fear to find Him.”

We sing a song that says, “*...and tremble at His Voice; and tremble at His Voice.*” May this be the prayer of our hearts: “Oh, God, bring that back to the Church. Restore to us a right fear – an awe-filled reverence – whereby we stand amazed by Your Presence.

Our pastor not only has a wonderful teaching ministry-gift, but such a clear, precise Word of the Lord prophetically. And yet I watch us take that so for granted. There's not much *trembling* at His Voice here. I've seen him call out people from the assembly by the direction of the Lord saying, “You're from here – your name is. . . – and you've got this and that. . . .”

Church! We ought to be trembling! “Oh, my God! That You would stoop to speak to us in such a way!” What an awesome God we serve! It's not “business as usual” here.

I'd like to take some of you with me to other places where I minister. Some are truly *Deadsville!* ☺ When I'd bring you back, then you'd appreciate more what we have here. And what we have here now is *nothing* compared to what we're about to have! I can see it!

Part 4

There are such incredible promises in the Word to those who will fear the Lord. He says, "*Your soul will dwell at ease*" (Ps.25:12,13). Then again, "*The secret of the Lord is with you that fear Him*" (vs.14).

You know what the fear of the Lord is? It's like this: "I love Him so much that I fear to hurt Him."

Lately I've been noticing, more and more, the times when I miss the nudging of the Holy Spirit. Does that make sense to you? I hope it does to *all* of you. It's when you get a hunch to do something – a little feeling – a gentle nudge. It's when you just get a feeling that you ought to say something to the guy next to you, or you ought to do something specific, or go to a certain place. And you simply don't do it – you let it pass – for whatever reason. I'm sure I have done that more times than I could ever count.

Lately, the Holy Spirit is reminding me – drawing my attention back to it – every time I miss His gentle nudge. As I go to bed at night (I suppose those are the only quiet moments in my whole day ☺) but while I'm lying there before the last little twilight thing that lingers before sleep, He says to me, "You really missed it. Remember this? And when I suggested that? And My other nudge?" I find myself, lying in bed, repenting every night! "I'm sorry, Lord! I'm so sorry. Oh, Lord, make me more sensitive to your Holy Spirit whisperings so that I move at that very moment!"

"Moses and the Mount. That's all Old Testament stuff, Iverna. What about the New Testament?" I knew you'd ask about that so I've picked out a God-fearing New Testament man for an example. ☺ In Acts 10, verse 2, it says it like this: "*Cornelius, a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always.*" If you want to know what it is to fear God, New Testament style – there you have a pattern.

Acts 10:2. "*One that feared God **with all his house.***" He brought his family into it! Can you remember what Joshua said? "*As for me **and my house,** we will serve the Lord.*" (Josh.24:15).

Some of you need to clean out your homes. You have some *stuff* in your house – because your young people want it or the kids want it or someone does. Entertainment stuff – games or videos or music. Or reading stuff. Or just *stuff* stuff. You know – some of you need to go through your house again and give it back to God. Hello? I just think we need to *get ready* – for when He comes on the scene.

"Oh, well, there we are; back to legalism." That's not legalism, Church – that's the *fear of the Lord*. I don't want Him to pass-over my house because there are *things* in there He doesn't want for me. I know you can't make a teenager serve the Lord. But you can make 'em want to! There's a vast difference. Think it through. Yes, we pray in our closets for them – but we also demand some things. You're the grown-up – standing before the Lord Whom you serve.

My father's demand was: "As long as you put your feet under my table and eat from my table, you *will* serve my God." And it didn't matter to him if I faked it or not. If I threatened that, he'd say: "Then fake it – but you'll go to my church and you'll serve my God." ☺ Oh, Hallelujah! I'm so thankful that I had that influence in my life! I didn't much appreciate it then, but I have been so glad for it.

The fear of the Lord promises the kinds of blessings that come to no one else! They prompt within the God-fearing person an *incredible* desire to give. Honestly, that's true. It isn't a matter of: "I've got to pay tithes" or "I have to give a little here...." But when you're a God-fearing person, you just sort of look for a place to give. This church is a giving church and I so appreciate that. We give – and give – and give – and give. And God blesses – and blesses – and blesses.

The fear of the Lord says it is “to hate evil” (Pr.8:13) – not people – but *evil*. Now, it’s one thing for me to hate evil generally – it’s another thing to hate evil – in me! Because instead of getting rid of the things that displease the Lord by killing them, we. . . . There’s a contrast we need to note here. That was the Old Testament way – every time the Lord wanted to bless His people, He had them kill somebody – one of their enemies. True or false? “You must kill the enemy and take over. Kill the enemy and take over.” And people today wonder: “What kind of a loving God is that?”

That is a God Who loves *purity*. Do you get the principle of it? He says, “Iverna, if you’re going to move to another spot from where you are in Me – if you’re going to grow up – you have to *kill the enemy* operating in you so you can take over.”

Now, instead of killing the enemy – here’s that contrast – I just “cage” it. Did you understand that? You see – I put him – I put those habits – those desires – those *things* that vex me – in a cage and shut the door. Then I say, “You will not have control of me.” But I keep it around (caged) in case I want to play with it later.

Well, I used to get by with that kind of “warfare.” I don’t know why that was. I guess I was so insensitive to the Holy Spirit – I just didn’t feel a big conviction that made me stop and take notice. But I’m telling you – things are different now. We’re into day two-and-a-half! And things are different.

The Holy Spirit is convicting, saying, “Oh no, you’re not keeping that for a pet! ☺ You open that door and stomp it to death! We’re not goin’ ‘round this mountain again! It’s the end of that thing!”

I hear Him saying to the Church: “If you will walk in that kind of fear – and are really overcoming – I give you long life (Pr.10:27) – and blessedness (Ps.128:14). I’ll give you sufficiency (Ps.34:9) – and you’ll have divine friendship (Ps.25:14). We sing that one: “I am a friend of God!” ☺

Figure it out for yourself. Read the Word looking for what He intends for those who truly fear Him – in the right, reverential way. You *will* inherit the promises. You’ll have protection (Ps.34:7) – deliverance (Ps.85:9) – and forgiveness (Ps.130:4). You’ll have guidance (“I just want to know His will”) when you learn to fear Him (Ps.25:12). You’ll have protection from men’s tongues (Ps.31:19,20). You will have His mercy (Lk.1:50) “*from generation to generation to those that fear the Lord.*” You will have acceptance – with Him! “I just wanna be pleasing to You, Lord.” Well – fear Him – and you will walk a balanced life.

Listen to this one: “*The man who fears God will avoid all extremes.*” That’s Ecclesiastes 7:18. Now, I’ll tell you what that means. You won’t just get pulled to this situation and then to another one. “Oh, I believe in *this*” and you move in that direction. Then someone else says, “Well, I believe in *this*” – and you’re pulled that way. God says, “If you fear the Lord, you won’t get pulled to either one of those extremes, you will walk a balanced life. You will believe in what the *Lord* says.”

If someone said to me, “Iverna, did you believe that the worship service tonight was good?” I’d say, “Absolutely, it was God.” Hello? Because I believe the Lord is in charge of our meetings. I don’t sit and pick apart every single little thing that happens. If God wants to do it a way I vote “no” on, I involve myself anyway. Come on, Church! It’s time to grow up!

You see, we’ve all got those little things that irk us: “If they’d just sing a hymn, I could get in to it.” Sure. Me too – I know all four verses. ☺ But if they sing one of their speed-things, I can get in to that too – and I catch a lot of the words. ☺ But I do that because my heart fears my God! I’ll serve Him any way I’m given a chance to serve Him! Wherever I go, I will please Him because I am led by His Spirit. I will walk a balanced life!

Three more things and I'm through. One – the fear of the Lord prevents pride – Romans 11:20 and Micah 6:8. Two – the fear of the Lord gives reasons for submission – Ephesians 5:21. And three – the fear of the Lord leads to rest – Hebrews 4:1.

Without the fear of the Lord there will not be those things. There'll be no rest. There'll be no guidance. There'll be no certainty. There'll be no balance.

What does it mean to have the fear of the Lord? I think we've clarified that. Basically, it's: "Have Thine own way, Lord; have Thine own way. Hold o'er my being, absolute sway. Fill with Thy Spirit, till all can see – Christ only, always, living in me."