

9. *The Exercise of Repentance*

By John Thiel, *Seeking to Please God Series*, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

We have been occupied in contemplation of the solemn, serious time in which we dwell, the day of judgement, a day of serious heart searching, a time in which God has commissioned us to do just that, to search our hearts, to examine closely, to afflict our souls when we see where we are not in tune with the Lord. As we have been researching this and searching our hearts in the light of God's word, we have covered some overwhelming things where we could see, This is where I have not been perfect.

In the beginning of this series we delved upon the necessity for us to not take the attitude of "holier than thou"; and after going into the depth of this we saw how this is revealed by our seating on the judgment seat over others, judging them and examining them, instead of ourselves. This research also continued with the following study on our need to *stay off the judgment seat*; and we saw that this has been our activity—judging others, seeing where they are wrong, and expressing ourselves in reference to this. Then we looked deep into the Levitical laws, and we saw certain things in the detail of being faithful in hygiene and in all those different laws of our social life. There again we saw details which showed us that we are not perfect in our life. We then looked at the *God of the Sabbath*; true Sabbath keeping was played out before us, and we saw that we needed some more correction there as well. Then again, the fact of having lost our first love was brought to our attention; we examined the fervour of our first love, and how this fervour has through the circumstances of life been diminished; and there we saw clearly as well that we need to be recovered from the loss of our first love. Then we studied the nature of the fragrance, the atmosphere, of our life; we examined and saw what a stink has come up before the Lord because of our worldliness and legalism.

Looking for an Alternative Faith

All these kinds of detail that we have been looking at are very overwhelming. We see so much (and there is much more yet to cover); we see so many things that make us feel so overwhelmingly unworthy that we think it is beyond us, we

can never be saved, because these ungodly characteristics are so much part of us. So it is that under the Seventh-day Adventist message, as it used to be presented, there are people who have come up in these new modern generations, of which we are part, that deem it an impossibility to ever reach this high calling; and so they seek to appease their sense of condemnation and shortcoming, their feelings of oppression because they are not reaching it; they seek for an alternative faith. And it is because of the message that we have been sharing here for many years that people are doing this. I remember that when I was a youth this material was still handed down to us by the older generations still alive at the time, and I heard and I received the complaints of the younger generation. They were saying they wanted to be free from this oppressiveness; and therefore they found alternative doctrines to release them. This oppression that is felt because God shows us the detail of our lives, if we do not look to the beauty of Jesus, that detail is so heavy that we start to look for a different doctrine; we start to think, This can't be correct; Jesus loves me, I shouldn't be feeling like this. So behind this problem, this particular doctrine of original Adventism, lies the arising of the new theology that is being put forth in the Adventist ranks today. The new theology came because people did not want this oppressive sensation. They wanted to be released from this sense of condemnation, from this overwhelming realisation that "we are too bad." So there was this liberalism, this new theology, that was introduced; and people came to this mentality that, "Jesus loves me anyway." This new theology started coming in when I was still a youth—in the late 60s.

What Is the Way?

What is the way of truth by which we may relieve ourselves under this pure truth that has been handed down to us from the pioneers? What is it by which I may be lifted out of oppressive depression because I see myself and I see greater detail of my failures? How can I be lifted out of this? The words of Psalm 51 are the wonderful introduction to this whole subject about finding relief while still remaining faithful to the pure doctrine of the seriousness of our time and the necessity of examining ourselves, afflicting our souls. What does God desire? How is He going to be pleased with us?

Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

What do you delight in, Lord? How can I be comforted?

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

So my brokenness, my sense of failure, is to serve to please God. He delights in that kind of sacrifice—a *broken and a contrite* spirit. What is it that pleases Him in this time of judgment?

Ezekiel 33:10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins [be] upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

Can you see the expression of the overwhelming sense of “My sins are too much; how can I live? I can’t be happy.”

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;

What pleases God? Not the death of the wicked; not this fact that I’m going to be condemned; no;

Ezekiel 33:11 ...but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

What pleases God? He is not pleased to see us suffering an eternal death. He wants us to be turned from our way.

Ezekiel 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn [yourselves] from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye.

This is the message for us today, because the judgement is upon us. *I will judge you, O house of Israel*, He says, according to your ways. As we examine our ways, we see that our ways have been so different to what God’s ways are, and they are so entrenched in our system that we think, I can’t even turn! What is needed? *Make you a new heart and a new spirit*. It is the motive force of my heart. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*. This needs to be altered. The truth must go into the recesses of our soul, and cleanse away all deep inside, to replace it by Christ’s beautiful righteousness. This is our activity.

What Is Our Part?

Ezekiel 18:31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, ... and make you a new heart and a new spirit

God alone can change my heart; but it says, *You* are to make you a new heart. In other words, He wants us to cooperate with Him, to engage together with Him in this work of changing the very dispositions of our hearts, the very language, the very form of our communication, to modulate my voice, and all these kinds of things. *Do* this, He says. But how? It comes out so readily. Without even thinking, out it comes, and there I go again, another dimension of my unChristlike reactions to life. God says: Just repent; just confess it; don't just mourn over the fact.

I have learned over the years that I have a tendency to mourn over my condition, but I don't really express a confession and a repentance. And as I was going through this week's experience, something was again played out in front of me, and I just broke down and cried to God, Lord, you can see, I am such a wretch; please forgive me; and my spirit was lifted straight away. Repent. Do it. Don't just murmur and complain about yourself. Repent. This is what God wants us to do during this hour of judgment in which He is judging us.

Repent, Do It

The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. {5BC 1085.4}

So when the opportunity comes, we do it; and it is all written there in the books. My character is there.

By His law He measures the character of every man. As the artist transfers to the canvas the features of the face, so the features of each individual character are transferred to the books of heaven. God has a perfect photograph of every man's character, and this photograph He compares with His law. He reveals to man the defects that mar his life, {Ibid.}

And this is where people are uncomfortable. He reveals to us the defects that mar our life; He reveals this character of ours that is so marred; and what does He want us to do?

He reveals to man the defects that mar his life, and calls upon him to repent and turn from sin. {Ibid.}

This really became embedded in my mind; I thought, Here I go, I am doing this, I am doing that, I am reacting here and there, and I just go around and shake my head in misery, Why am I doing this? Stop that! Stop that, John. Don't go around miserable because you are like this. Immediately repent. Right there and then, repent. And as we repent, God is pleased. This is what He wants us to do.

Let It Hurt

As we, then, search our hearts now, the question is, Have I been doing this, or have I failed doing this, just walking around, mopping in my depressed condition because the Lord is revealing to me the things I don't really want to know? How many times I have shared God's word to people and they said, I don't want to know. Why? Because it hurts too much. But so what? Let it hurt and cause me to repent. This is what the Lord wants me to do. So simple. And when I do, I am lifted up because the following things I want to share now come into action.

God is intensively active to lead us to repentance; this is what He wants us to do. And as we are overwhelmed with this message and we want to find an alternative, the following scripture comes into focus. As we had seen previously, we tend to judge other people; therefore the apostle goes on to say:

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

This is interesting. We often see in other people the things that are in our own nature. So he says, You're judging them, but it's in you! *Thou that judgest doest the same things.*

Romans 2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

The doctrine of truth reveals to me the defects in my life, but in His mercy to me, He has no pleasure in the death of us, because of our ways that will destroy us. He has no pleasure in that. His goodness, His forbearance, His longsuffering, is there for a purpose. What is it there for? As I see myself as I really am and I see that God has not cast me off, what is this meant to achieve? Have I missed the point somewhere? What is it meant to achieve? *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.* The love of God, God's goodness, *leads me to repentance.* This is God's goodness: *For God so loved the world.* That means me, with all my discoveries of my worldliness. He loved me.

The Goodness of God

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Can you see how this is all interlocked with God's desire and pleasure? His desire is that I should believe in Jesus and be released from this condemnation. He loves me; His goodness leads me to repentance. The atonement of Jesus, believing *in* the atonement, believing *in* what Jesus is to us, there lies our relief, our forgiveness. The moment I am overwhelmed with the sense of my condition, I turn to His love, and I realise that He loves me. His longsuffering, His forbearance, His amazing mercy, just burns in your heart, and you can't continue to lament and murmur anymore. Instead, you say, "What? You still love me? I repent." And I express myself, because I see the detail of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

I want to be released; I want to be uplifted; I don't want to stay in the doldrums of my depression because of my sins? Here it is:

Psalm 130:4 ...[there is] forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. 6 My soul [waiteth] for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: [I say, more than] they that watch for the morning.

What is he trying to say here? Have you sometimes been awake at night, and you can't sleep properly, and your mind runs away with you, and you are looking forward to see light again, because in the darkness everything oppresses you? This is why he says: *My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.* I want the light; I want to be relieved out of my darkness. *I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

Psalm 130:7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD [there is] mercy, and with him [is] plenteous redemption. 8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

So next time another detail comes up before you and shows you what a miserable character you have, remember this. God does not want me to continue in this and feel so oppressed that I am down in the darkness all the time because I am seeing my sinfulness. I am looking for relief? Well, here is relief: *There is forgiveness with Thee.* God forgives me; but what must I do to be forgiven? Repent. And as I do repent, as I do take hold of the hope that is in my Lord, His *mercy* and *plenteous redemption*, what happens? As I repent and I confess to Him my condition and my sin; as I confess it to Him and ask Him to forgive me, I am uplifted. He wipes away my tears. So cease your mourning and weeping;

Jesus Wipes Away the Tears

This is what I have experienced time and time again. I weep over my condition, and then the Lord Jesus comes and wipes away those tears. Not with a hanky, but with the beautiful understanding of His love. I can't cry anymore; I rejoice instead. This is what we must examine our hearts over, to take God's word and believe and trust in this redeeming forgiveness, and *do* what He says—repent.

1 Timothy 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some [men] they follow after.

Our sins are opened to us beforehand, so that we may repent and be uplifted out of them. Don't repine, don't despair; look to the atonement. And as you look to the atonement, look at the wonderful provision that is made for you. I know I have to repent. But as I read God's word, it also talks of a repentance that must be repented of. So I can't even repent properly. Now what do I see when I look at the atonement that will lift me out of my horrible depression? Look at the provision that is made; here is the atonement in action by which I may repent correctly.

Look to the Atonement

Jesus is here speaking:

Psalm 40:7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me,

Then He cries out to God:

Psalm 40:10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation. 11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

Who is speaking? That sounds like me, doesn't it? As I examine God's word, I see so many sins in me, so many errorsome ways; *they are more than the hairs of my head*. O Lord... I love You, but *innumerable evils have compassed me about*. And it is Jesus speaking. The atonement. There He is, loaded with the sense of my depression, loaded with the sense of the revelations that come as I examine my heart, loaded with the burden of sin that I am suffering under; and what

does He do with that burden with me? Are you in Christ? Then follow Him. What does He do with my burden, that I should do together with Him in the atonement?

Psalm 69:5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

People often think this is David speaking; but who is it really? You can tell by verse 21:

Psalm 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Who was that? This person is actually an intercessor; He says:

Psalm 69:6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

Here He is interceding when we are ashamed for our sins. *Let not those that seek Thee be confounded*, He says. When I am confounded, Jesus is praying for me. And remember, the suffering of Jesus there is something that is present tense for Him in the sanctuary above right now; and He is pleading my case, He is praying like this. Then He said:

Psalm 69:13 But as for me, my prayer [is] unto thee, O LORD, [in] an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. 14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink:

He is confessing, isn't He? He is saying, "*My foolishness, my sins are more than the hair of my head.* You know My foolishness, Lord! You can see Me; I am confessing to You." And for the sake of us, in the atonement, Jesus is doing this; and He is saying to us, Now you do the same thing with Me. Make you a new heart; change your attitude; stop mourning and complaining about why you are like that. Just accept Jesus taking it off you if you will. This is what we are called upon to engage in.

Our Provision of True Repentance

This following quote leaves no shadow of doubt that our provision of true repentance is Jesus Christ.

It is not now the work of the sinner to make peace with God, but to accept Christ as his peace and righteousness. {TMK 109.3}

We think we have to make peace with God; but no, it is not our work to do this, *but to accept Christ*, accept what He is doing with me, and enter into that intimacy with Him.

Thus man becomes one with Christ and one with God. There is no way by which the heart may be made holy, save through faith in Christ. Yet many think that repentance is a kind of preparation which men must originate themselves before they can come to Christ. {Ibid.}

Have I entertained this false thinking? Do I have to fill myself with this sense of my guilt and repent? Many think that they need to have a repentance originating from themselves so they can come to Christ.

They must take steps themselves in order to find Christ a mediator in their behalf. It is true that there must be repentance before there is pardon, but the sinner must come to Christ before he can find repentance. {Ibid.}

Just as I am I must come to Christ so that I can *find repentance*.

It is the virtue of Christ that strengthens and enlightens the soul, so that repentance may be godly and acceptable. {Ibid.}

So my repentance must be *godly and acceptable*. Can I produce such a thing?

Repentance is as certainly a gift of Jesus Christ as is forgiveness of sins. {Ibid.}

It's a gift.

Repentance cannot be experienced without Christ, {Ibid.}

This is what our exercise of repentance is all about. How can I repent correctly? It can only be found in Christ.

Repentance cannot be experienced without Christ, for it is the repentance of which He is the author that is the ground upon which we may apply for pardon. {Ibid.}

Don't Distract Yourself from True Release

He is the author of the repentance that I will get my pardon from. This is what we were just reading previously: I see Jesus repenting my sins. And as you permit this to permeate your mind, you will be lifted out of the depressive sensations. You don't have to find a new theology to make you feel happy. You don't have to find other avenues to lift you out of the darkness in which you find yourself. How many people look for other means to lift themselves out of

their darkness. How many people look for alternative ways. They think, “If I’m having a bad time, I’ve got to go away somewhere;” instead of going to Jesus. How many have done that? Examine yourself again. Where do you go to get a happy feeling from? You are all depressed, and you think, I’ve got to do something different; I’ve got to go somewhere else. No; go to Jesus! Look upon His wonderful word, and you will be changed into happiness. The terrible feeling of oppression might go while you go around doing some other things; because like a little child you side-track it, and the child goes and forgets about its heartache. But we must go to Jesus, and not be distracted by anything else; because if I don’t go to Jesus, the root of my problem will not be removed; it will come and hit me in the face again and again. Go to Jesus. The atonement is precious. And as I look at the atonement, I see Him confessing *my* sin; and my heart says, What?? Now all that He wants me to do is say, Thank you, Jesus; I do come to You.

It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that men are led to repentance. It is from Christ that the grace of contrition comes, as well as the gift of pardon, {Ibid.}

A broken and a contrite heart He will not despise.

...and repentance as well as forgiveness of sins is procured only through the atoning blood of Christ. Those whom God pardons He first makes penitent. {Ibid.}

O to get our hearts and minds around this atonement story in living practice. I thank God for the Spirit of Prophecy; and I thank God for the following words of Acts. It’s written in the Bible, and Sister White has just expanded on it above. Speaking of Jesus, it says:

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

I need to get that as a gift, and the only way I can get it is to behold Jesus, and to believe in Him; *for God so loved the world that He gave Jesus*, that by believing in Him, by engaging with Him in this transaction of Him confessing my sins, I, in my depressive state, might feel His depression as He feels my depression, and I am already being lifted out of my darkness. How this has been a reality in my life. When I was in this deplorable state, the Lord reminded me: When others were in the state that you are in now, you showed them the way; now what are you going to do about it? My heart started to be lifted up out of the darkness straight away, because right there I was in Gethsemane together with Christ with my sins, and Jesus was there with my sins, and I am relieved; I don’t have to carry that burden anymore. And as the next thing comes up, I can experience

the relief once again, Lord, here is my sin; I thank You for the gift of repentance and for the gift of forgiveness. Believe it. This is what we need.

Take the Next Step

As we engage in deep heart searching and we meet with these horrifying discoveries, let us take the next step. As you, in the examination of yourself, meet with the discovery of yourself, take the next step, engage with Jesus. Take the step; do this.

No soul can take an advance step in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, without obtaining fresh supplies from the Fountain of grace and truth. {ST, November 26, 1894 par. 8}

What is *the Fountain of grace and truth*? Jesus. So when I have done what the Lord wants me to do, when I have examined myself with deep heart searching in this time of the judgment; after I have taken that step, then I must take the next one. What is this step?

He who is truly penitent does not forget his past sins, and grow careless about them as soon as he has obtained forgiveness. {ST, November 26, 1894 par. 7}

This is not a pie-in-the-sky sort of happiness now, where everything is fine. No; if I am truly penitent together with Christ, I don't *forget my past sins, and grow careless about them.*

On the contrary, the clearer the evidence he has of divine favor, the more he sees to regret in his past life of sin. {Ibid.}

So I discover more regrets as I continue to take hold of the fountain. What happens?

He loathes, abhors, and condemns himself, and is more and more astonished that he should have continued in rebellion so long. He renews his repentance toward God, {Ibid.}

I am going through the exercise of searching my heart; I am taking this step and looking to Jesus; and as I see my past sins, I abhor myself. I am absolutely aghast at me, that I should be so thick that I would not get the benefit of God's wonderful grace. I see more clearly the evidence of His divine favour, and see more to regret in my past life. I loathe, abhor, and condemn myself. I renew my repentance to God; how?

Grasping More Decidedly Jesus' Hand

He renews his repentance toward God, while he grasps more decidedly the hand of Jesus Christ, and finds that repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life. He who thus repents, appreciates the righteousness of Christ as above silver and gold, above every earthly tie and affection. {Ibid.}

Above every earthly tie and affection—think about what this means. I am trying to alleviate my burden and my depression, so I go to something of the world to relieve it? No; this is not what Jesus is going to help me to do. Instead, I grasp *more decidedly the hand of Jesus*. And as I do so, and find *that repentance is my daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life*, I appreciate *the righteousness of Christ as above silver and gold*, above all these other things that could detract me from my depression.

This is interesting; I have exercised myself in this in the past. When I was in financial need, I was feeling the depression of that. But then, when the silver and gold came, I was lifted, and everything was fine. But when it comes to the story of redemption, we don't look to Jesus, even though this is much better than silver or gold to take me out of my depression; we think, I can go and buy something now that I have wanted to buy for a long time. This is all out of the question. It is Jesus, and the application of the atonement, that will make me feel happy.

We are living in the day of atonement. The day of judgment is called the *day of atonement*. In other words, it is there, at such a time, that my atonement with Jesus is to come before me. And as I see Him pleading my case in the heavenly sanctuary, as I occupy my mind with what He is doing, praying for me in agonising pleadings which in His experience were my sins that He suffered; as I look at that, can you see what actually happens inside of your spirit?

Yes, we may loathe, abhor, and condemn ourselves; but don't let that loathing and condemning and abhorring turn to despair, because Jesus is there. I grasp *more decidedly the hand of Jesus*. Are we doing this in this time of judgment? Have we been doing this? Again you can see another examination point. Am I doing this? This is the activity that God wants us to engage in in this hour of God's judgement, in this day of atonement. If we have sunken in dismay, into a state of hopeless despair, because we see what we have done, that we have been rebellious against God; as I look at the details of my sins, I can hardly lift my head anymore; it's a hopeless condition; so what am I to do to lift myself out of this?

God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power.
{ML 47.3}

We are to be witnesses to the power of grace. Remember, grace is *undeserved favour*. This is what the atonement is: undeserved.

Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; {Ibid.}

So whatever course has been offensive to God in my life, if I see that I have sinned badly, and I see the offensiveness of my actions to Him, and I repent, then He freely accepts me. This is grace, and we are to be witnesses of that.

...when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy. {Ibid.}

Do you wonder that a person like David, with such terrible sins, has been given to us as our example? It was so that I might still have hope when I discover my terrible sinfulness, and I think, "I have sinned too badly; I can never be used of the Lord again." What did David say after he had fallen?

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit. 13 [Then] will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

In the legalistic mentality that we are surrounded by in legalistic Adventism today, the most terrible sinner is often regarded as a hopeless case in the ministry. But according to these words above, the veriest sinner who truly repents before His God, is placed *in the highest position of trust*, and is sent forth *into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim God's boundless mercy*.

So what are we to do when we can see the overwhelming sense of our sin, our unworthiness, and we condemn and loathe and abhor ourselves? I take hold of the hand of Jesus, and I go forth under His wonderful declarations that He is going to use me. Therefore what am I to do in this understanding?

Shake Yourself from This!

Isaiah 52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, [and] sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Shake yourself from this sin that is around your neck. Remember, when Jesus was there in Gethsemane and the cross, it came upon His neck. Loose yourself

from this; you can! You don't have to remain in this state. Shake yourself from the dust, in the light of this. And this continues now:

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

The power of His grace will *be seen upon thee*. This is the reason why I have never given up. No one knows the struggles that I have gone through, right from the beginning in my walk with God, the mistakes I have made, the hopeless, overwhelming sense of condemnation, the abhorring of myself. As I look back and see this, and this other thing, and that other thing, I could truly be overwhelmed and in a hopeless condition, just where Satan wanted me. He wanted me to stop identifying this beautiful truth, because there are so few who are doing this. But I decided. I will never forget the day when I hit my fist in my hand, because I could see what Satan was trying to do; and I said, Satan is not going to get me, no! And one time the Lord had to send a magpie to help me, to tell me, Look up, and don't despair; because it was near the end there; I really thought I was finished. And then the Lord lifted me up. This is what is written in this scripture.

Arise, shine! Shake thyself from the dust! Believe in the atonement. Let the atonement cleanse you as you repent with Christ, and go on proclaiming to the people the message of God's grace. And lift those who are ready to despair of ever being used in the hand of the Lord; help them back up again through this beautiful story.

May God help us in this judgement hour in which we live, to never do what so many people are doing. They revert back to where they came from, like the dog going back to its vomit. They go back to the dust they were called out of. Don't do it, no matter what. Stay with Jesus; let Him lift us out in this time of serious judgment hour message.

Amen.