



*“Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters.”*

- Isaiah 55:1a

Week 5

The Surrendered Heart

Victor Hugo, the great French novelist of the 19th Century, was sitting in his study one sunny morning when he heard a tap-tap-tapping against the window. Rising to investigate, he discovered a lone bee, trapped inside the study, flinging itself repeatedly against the glass attempting to get to the garden beyond. On the floor beneath the window lay some dead bees that had pursued a similar strategy before running out of gas.

Hugo lifted a napkin from a table and attempted to capture the bee to guide it out an open window. When it became aware of Hugo, the bee frantically plunged this way and that trying to escape. Eventually Hugo was able to gently grasp the frightened bee and slip it through the window. In a moment, the bee was flitting freely about the garden.

Gazing at the freed prisoner, Hugo reflected on the similarities between his relationship with the bee and God’s relationship with human beings. The bee, trapped in a predicament beyond its understanding, longed to be free. To that end, it was working all the angles it could. Hugo, from his broader perspective, could see that it had no chance for freedom pursuing its present path. Yet, when he tried to help, the bee wouldn’t have it. It went into crazy gyrations and would have stung the hand trying to help it if it could. The bee’s irrational fear would have doomed it to join its dead friends on the floor if Hugo had not persisted in his under-appreciated role as bee savior.

What should an enlightened bee have done? How might it have gained its freedom and saved itself the bumps and bruises it later sat in its beehive nursing? An enlightened bee would have realized its dilemma and the uselessness of its own solutions and would have submitted to the nice man with the napkin trying to help out. Yet that would have meant a risk. It would have meant surrendering itself into the hands of the strange creature towering over it — a creature that had the power to liberate it or squash it out of existence. Given the options, an unenlightened bee chose to fight.

It is a little mortifying to have so much in common with a honeybee. Time and time again, in the middle of our predicaments, we find ourselves fighting the nice man with the napkin. It is a battle we can’t win, of course. If we seem to win, we really lose. If we buzz and sting until he withdraws, we have only set ourselves up to join our dead friends on the floor. It takes a long time to understand that there are certain battles for which the road to victory is the way of surrender.

Surrender — the word has about it something of a sense of adversaries and battle.

I would suggest that we turn our attention to those moments in our lives when we find ourselves struggling in opposition to God. Resistant, independent, contrary. Beating our wings against the glass. Those moments are, perhaps, the homely part of a relationship with God. Yet, since they so often find their way into our experience, we probably need to give them some time.

The ultimate destination of spiritual surrender is liberty. Rescue, emancipation, freedom. Surprising solutions for the journey of life. But along the way, surrender to God takes us temporarily through some territory that can make our flesh cringe. This is because surrendering

ourselves to God involves exposing the truth of the Gospel to our stubborn, anxious, and sometimes delicate places.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”*
– **Matthew 16:24-25**

Surrender is the great separator. It is the doorway through which sleepy religious curiosity becomes wide awake to personal commitment. It is the master key that fits each door in the castle, allowing the king to enter every room. Spiritual surrender is to God what the patient’s consent is to the surgeon — it allows the doctor to sharpen the tools and start the operation. (Excerpt taken from “The Intimate Journey: God in the Daily Adventure,” by Joel Warne)

Day 1 – Come to the Waters

1. How did you identify with the story of the bees?

Read **Isaiah 55:1-3** and think about these verses that call you to surrender and experience freedom.

2. Where do you specifically sense God is calling you to come and drink?

3. What is promised to those who surrender?

4. What must you do to surrender and seek the deep things of God?

5. Can you get in touch with your feelings here? Express them.

6. Read **Isaiah 55:6-7**. Where do you recognize and identify with the call of God in this passage?

7. Read **Isaiah 55:8-11**. What does the promise in verse 11 mean to you and your life desires?

Read **Isaiah 55:11-13**.

8. Put God's promise into your own words.

9. What things are keeping you from surrendering to God right now?

Day 2 – Inexpressible and Glorious Joy

In the New Testament book of 1 Peter, God's people are scattered around the world as they experience great persecution and suffering. In **1 Peter 1:6**, they greatly rejoice even while suffering grief during all kinds of trials. They see that their faith is of greater worth than gold (verse 7). Though they have not seen Jesus, they love Him. They believe in Him and are filled with "an inexpressible and glorious joy."

Do you want to have such strong love and affection for Jesus that you can see inexpressible joy overflow in your life? What would that be like? Do you want to be at the place in your life where the satisfaction and peace offered by the world does not come close to comparing to that joy?

Stand in any checkout line and you'll see magazines with covers proclaiming, "Ten Ways to Get What You Want from Your Husband," or "Three Secrets to Satisfaction in the Bedroom." Yet if you're like most of us, you also know at least one woman who seemingly has everything but will admit that she is not happy or satisfied with her life. Maybe that's you.

Or maybe you know someone who has made the pursuit of some activity, skill, or sport such a priority that she has neglected her family. Maybe that's even you. The pursuit of excellence is good in itself – but when we expect it to fill up the emptiness in our souls, then our priorities are skewed.

Dig deep inside yourself and ask what is "due North" for you. Toward what do you naturally turn for meaning and purpose in life? What is the essential focus of your life, not what you **should** say, but the actual main impulse? If that focus is pointing in the right direction, the joy will be there. What would a surrendered heart that is experiencing inexpressible and glorious joy look like for you? Jot down some thoughts on the following lines:

Not long ago we looked at the compass. When one's compass of life points due North, that's when the indescribable and magnificent joy flows. No worldly passion and glory can equal the joy God offers. Countless women have experienced the success that does not satisfy and the joy of knowing God that does. Knowledge of God does not equal affection for God.

Day 3 – “Why Have a Quiet Time?” by John White

Underline some key thoughts.

Quiet times work. Prayer and Bible study change us — and the people around us. Our values alter once we start meeting regularly with God. Some things that once seemed important shrivel, while others swell in significance.

We see people differently. We pity people we once feared and pray for people who once enraged us. We will, to be sure, approach problems differently, feel differently about our work, our studies, our future. Our goals will have changed so that life slowly takes on new meaning.

The changes are understandable since we are influenced by our Creator God with whom we spend time daily. But do I recommend that we have a daily quiet time solely for these reasons? As a matter of fact, no. There's much more to be gained.

To commune with God is to touch both infinity and eternity. We have opened a window to both a beyondness and an immediacy, which time and space are powerless to provide and which we can experience in no other way. The most widely read person has only rubbed shoulders with a few obscurity-bound professors or dipped into a selection of “the world's greatest books” — a contradictory jumble of finite perspectives. Yet we are invited to private tutorials with the fountain of ultimate wisdom.

We are invited to collaborate in the creation of destiny, not to be a mere spectator but a coauthor. God does not want to determine all things in splendid solitude by the word of His power. He wants the painting of the future to be a family project in which we all play a part under his benign direction. Earth's policymakers are but actors in a drama written in heaven, and we are offered a pen to do some of the writing. Can we imagine anything better?

Yet, not even for any of these reasons but for love's sake would I urge us to meet God daily!

Psalm 42:1-2 states: *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God, My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

Our quest must be that of a suitor too blinded by beauty to descend to calculating self-interest, too intoxicated with love to care about the cost or the consequences of his suit.

It must be the love of Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet, enchanted by his words and grace, but deaf and blind to the frustration of her resentful sister (**Luke 10:38-42**). An enchantment of that sort will not be broken, nor its pleasures denied. It is time we forgot about our spiritual performance and our spiritual needs and give ourselves up to passion.

“Beautiful!” You sigh. “I wish I felt that way. But I don't love God like that. So, what can I do? How can I love when my heart is cold, when all I experience is the nagging guilt of knowing my love is a sorry thing not worth offering?”

“The measure of a woman’s character is not what she gets from her ancestors, but what she leaves her descendants.”

- Author Unknown

But wait. A moment ago, when you read the words of the psalmist, wasn’t there a faint stirring of envy, an echo of the longing the psalmist expressed? If there was — and it matters not how feeble or faint — then your love is not absent but suppressed. It lies dormant beneath the weight of unbelief and discouragement.

Our love for God lies within many of us like a coiled spring, inactive but straining for...

It is a potential volcano, a dangerous thing that we fear to set free lest we shall have to cope with raging fire. Unless we take the risk of loving, we will only be half alive. But we should not be afraid of the longing within; it is more than matched by the greater longing of a God who planted it there.

Come, then, for love’s sake. Come boldly, defying fears. Enter into a love-pact to meet Christ daily. Come trembling to confess inadequacies. He is gentle and will understand. He will not force us or hurry the pace beyond what we are able to tolerate.

Come to His footstool. Come trusting. And come for love of Him.

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Day 4 – Diving Deeper

Read **Matthew 10:32-36**.

1. Ask the Lord to speak to you. Record your thoughts.

2. After reading these verses, how do you think God is speaking to you specifically to go deeper?

Day 5 – Apprehending God

Read Chapter 4 from “The Pursuit of God.”

1. What is your understanding of the word *apprehend* when it refers to God? (Look it up in a dictionary to get a new “take” on it. You may be surprised by what you find.)

2. How do you respond to A.W. Tozer’s statement that to many people “God is an inference, not a reality?” Describe how this attitude might be observed in some people you know.

3. How does the Bible help the reader move from this vague sense about God to recognizing Him as someone with whom we can have a personal experience?

4. What does Tozer mean by the term reality?

5. In what ways is God the great reality?

6. What does the author mean when he writes that “we must seek to be other-worldly?”

7. What will obedience to the Word of Christ bring us?

8. What is the prayer you most deeply desire?

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Prayer Needs

Record the personal needs of your BLC sisters:

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