

ABIDING IN GOD

Peter Hay, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 1 February 2026
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Good morning, everyone. I am going to continue this morning in the same theme that I was speaking on yesterday. I began by giving an overview or summary of the steps of salvation that lead to God abiding in us, which is when we are born of God. But in the NBS in October, we made a key statement about the necessity for two realities to obtaining the promise of the Spirit. (That promise is our glorification as men who are made in the image and likeness of God in the resurrection.) Those two requirements are that *God must abide in us* (we have to be born of God), but that is insufficient for salvation. The second condition to inheriting the promises of God is that a *hearer must abide in God*. As we receive and walk in the light of the word that proceeds from God's messengers, we are established in the life and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So there is a word that we need to continue to walk in. As we do that, we are being established in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the true implication of baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That has been quite an adjustment to our understanding, to our practise and to dealing with our sacramental expectations and understanding of baptism. In the great commission, Jesus explained that these aspects of baptism (immersion into the name of the Father, the name of the Son and the name of the Holy Spirit), are through discipleship under the instruction of messengers. We *do* need to be baptised. with water, but that is our identification and commitment to be discipled. The process through which this immersion happens into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is through discipleship under the instruction of messengers who belong to a presbytery in the right hand of Christ. As we were illuminated to that, when we read the great commission again, we see that that is exactly what it says. Let us have a look at that. Matthew 28 verses 18 to 20: It says: 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them... [baptising is the process of discipling] ...make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit [How is this baptism working?], by teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.' The disciples had met Christ as Lord, and they had received Christ's word as commands, they were then to teach those commands to those who were being discipled. And this is our immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then He said, 'And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' By receiving and obeying these instructions (this is the teaching that we are receiving from messengers sent by Christ), a son of God is able to follow Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. This is the word being a 'lamp to our feet and a light to our path'. It is defining for us a place and a way to walk. This word is being proclaimed as commandments. The pathway is the pathway that Jesus pioneered through His offering journey from Gethsemane through to Calvary and we can only walk on this pathway through obedience to the word. That is what Paul said in Hebrews chapter 5 verse 9. 'Having been perfected, Christ became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.'

All I am trying to do is establish that salvation is not found in new birth. Even though new birth is essential to being able to join this journey. Salvation is found on this pathway that Christ pioneered, and we journey on that pathway by being obedient to His word. 'He became the Author of salvation to all who obey Him.' As we are being led and enabled by the Holy Spirit for our participation on this pathway that has been authored or pioneered for us, our salvation is being accomplished through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. We have a word that is coming that is defining for us a pathway, and we are walking on that pathway through obedience. As we do that (walking in the light of that word), salvation is being accomplished through the process of regeneration and renewing. We know that, because Paul said that the Father is the Author of salvation to all who obey Him. 'The Father saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Can you see the point? We

are on the pathway of salvation. We are obtaining salvation through this regeneration and renewing process in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

Why are regeneration and renewing so critical to our salvation? It is because through this work of regeneration and renewing, the ground of our heart can be changed as we are delivered from the impediments to fruitfulness as a son of God. Our salvation is not found through the planting or even germination of the seed. Our salvation corresponds to the *fruit* that you bring forth from that seed. Jesus explained that to come to fruitfulness, we need the ground of our heart to be dealt with. So regeneration and renewing are really focused on our humanity. It is dealing with the issues that belong to the stones of law and the thorny matters that compete with the life and sanctification that belong to new birth.

These impediments include the stones of law, which are the basis of our judgements and complaints, particularly in relation to suffering and apparent injustice. They also include the thorny anxieties. The cares of this world - that word 'cares' actually means 'anxieties' - the thorny anxieties that belong to knowing ourselves through reason. We have used the term 'mind-chatter'. It is the fact that we engage with life through the law of our mind. It is the law of our mind that is competing with the word of truth planted in our spirit. That is what is growing up and that is where the anxieties are. That is where the thorniness comes from. They include the thorny anxieties that belong to knowing ourselves through reason. [There is also] the deceitfulness of riches. Riches are whatever your treasure is. I am not just talking about income. Jesus said, 'Wherever your treasure is, that is where your heart will be.' As we learnt yesterday, that is what you will present yourselves for. We will either present ourselves as slaves of sin (because we are pursuing something or the treasure is something other than our sanctification), or if our sanctification is our treasure, we will be slaves of righteousness. That is the deceitfulness of riches. That is where we confuse what we believe to be our treasure with the blessing of God. It is as if prosperity, success or basically everything going well demonstrate that we are being blessed. Can you see that that is not what we are learning about

journeying on the pathway Christ has pioneered. It does not mean that God wants us to have an unpleasant life. It just means that if we are journeying with Christ, we are bringing forth the fruit of life and peace in every circumstance we are in. The deceitfulness of riches is confusing prosperity with the blessing of obtaining an eternal inheritance.

What is competing with new creation life (or the definition of our sanctification)? It is all the hopes and dreams and expectations and pursuits that we hold onto. In the end, that is the 'flower of the field'. That flower is a glory. It is the glory of man, and it is competing with what we should be doing which is showing forth the glory of God. If we do not recognise the distinction between these two, we will be deceived and we will think that the glory which is described in the Scriptures as the flower of the field is the glory that we are to demonstrate as a son of God. That is going to fade away; it has no enduring expression.

What is the evidence of this regenerative process in our life that is dealing with the stones of law and these thorny agendas that are competing with new creation obedience? The obvious answer is *fruit*. That is the reason that we are being delivered from the stones of law and the thorns. It is so that we bring forth fruit. And this fruit specifically pertains to our immersion in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit. I have put together the way that we are to walk following Jesus who is our King and who is priesting us a participation. In that process there is a regeneration happening to deliver us to fruitfulness and the fruit will be in relation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What is the fruit of immersion into each of these names?

The fruit of immersion into the Father is the capacity to glorify the Father through obedience as a son of God. The other fruit that we are able to demonstrate is the cultural reformation in our marriages because our capacity to be one spirit is from the Father and the covenant of marriage is 'His holy institution that He loves'. If we are walking on a pathway that is bringing us to fruitfulness in relation to the Father, it will look like reformation in our marriages. The fruit of our marriages should be sons of God. That is what

the Father said: 'I have given you a remnant of the Spirit to make you one because I seek godly seed.' That is beautiful fruit that we are bringing forth as we are being immersed into the name of the Father.

What about into the name of the Son? The fruit of immersion into the Son is our function and fellowship in the body of Christ. It is our function and fellowship in the body of Christ and reformation in our houses, for Christ is the Head of our house. If you are walking in the light of the word, you will have the fruit of reformation in your families. You will be able to testify of that fruit. Then, as body members, who are then finding reformation as families, the next expression of fruit that belongs to immersion in the Son is our capacity to be joined house to house. This is what it means to be an 'elect lady'. This is the bride of Christ who is coming forth from Christ through fellowship in His travail. That is the next lot of fruit that belongs to regeneration and renewing.

What about the fruit of immersion into the Holy Spirit? Fruit of immersion into the Holy Spirit is that we are able to reveal the Father and the Son as temples of the Holy Spirit. We are already temples of the Holy Spirit because God abides in us. But now, having received from the Holy Spirit the capacity of seven Spirits, we are able to reveal the Father and the Son. We are witnesses. That is what Jesus said. 'You will receive power from on high and you will become witnesses.' A witness is a person who has a testimony. We are witnesses of Christ and of the Father through the reformation that is happening in us and in our marriages and in our families as we journey by the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

The fruit produced by walking blamelessly, individually, as couples and as households is the witness. It is not just that you are going to know more stuff; to be able to say more stuff; it is that you become the witness. You are the fruit of this process at work. We are bearing fruit in relation to our immersion in the Father, in the Son and the Holy Spirit through obedience to the word proceeding from Christ the King. This is the evidence that we are abiding in God. I started at the beginning to say that a person who is being

baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is being immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If you are bearing that fruit, that is the evidence of you abiding in God. That is the evidence of your baptism at work. You have to present yourself in obedience to that word so that the regenerative work is happening in your life. You will not bear fruit by accident. You actually have to exercise the faith that is coming in the word to present yourself for this. Believing is someone who is following the King and this is both fundamental to God abiding in us but then to you abiding in God.

It is not only that the fruit is the evidence that we are abiding in God, but the fruit is also the evidence that you are receiving a double portion of oil. That means that right now you are part of the 144 000. The first portion of oil that God is delivering to us is to abide in God. Would you agree that that is a portion of oil coming to us - God abiding in us? But the second portion is evident when this ministry flows from us because we abide in God. Having been immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are showing forth Their glory. That is what it means to have a double portion of oil. You can and should have that now, simply by receiving the word and walking in its light. Ambivalence (being at ease, being lukewarm in relation to the word that is coming) is the opposite of having a double portion of oil. That will cause the Lord to spew you out. Let us not be ambivalent about this. Let us be full of faith. Faith is coming in the word. But first we have to be delivered from every other expectation - hopes, dreams and expectations that are competing with this true hope. This portion marks us as part of the 144 000.

Here is another key point. I know this is a little bit dense, but this is very important. The 144 000 are households who are being built together on Christ and into the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem. You are walking on the pathway; you are bearing fruit in relation to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; you have a double portion of oil. That marks you as a house that belongs to the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem. That is an amazing point. We know that, because when the apostle John described the New Jerusalem (which is the bride of Christ), he identified the characteristic number of the wall as 144. So, if you are being

built on Christ as part of this wall, you are already that double portion company. Can you rejoice in that today? Let us stir up love and good works because we are seeing the day approaching when He is coming back and we are rejoicing at that. We are not nervous: 'Am I going to be ready?' We are confident because we are walking by faith. Regeneration and renewing are happening, and we are able to testify of the reformation that is happening in our marriages. If you do not have a testimony of reformation in your marriage, you are either perfect or deceived. If you are not having to give yourself to the mess of reformation in your household, you are either perfect or deceived. It is not a good situation. The fact of the matter is that our testimony is not perfection. Our testimony is blamelessness. That is what the mark of having this portion is. That means you are being built into a wall. You become an access point for others to come into the city. That is what it means to be a witness. You are not witnessing because you have a better theology. You are witnessing because you are the demonstration of the gospel of God. This is a wall to the whole world.

The connection between the bride and our immersion in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is actually revealed by the description of the bride in Revelation 12. David taught on this yesterday. I am saying we are part of the bride because we are bringing forth the fruit that belongs to immersion in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When John saw the bride, He described the bride as exhibiting the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Revelation 12 verse 1 (as we read yesterday), '...a woman [the bride] clothed with the sun... [that is the glory of the Father; that is the fruit being demonstrated through your immersion in the name of the Father] ...with the moon under her feet... [that is the glory of the Son; being built on Christ the Rock as a member of His body; finding reformation as houses that are being made worthy; and then being able to be joined house to house. It is not just *you* built on Christ — it is you being built *together* on Christ. That is the glory of the Son] ...and on her head, a garland of twelve stars ... [this is the glory of the Holy Spirit]'

In our session yesterday, I was obviously talking about the importance of meeting Christ as Lord

and King and receiving the hope of the gospel as a birthright. However, as I have been talking now about baptism, we need to continue to receive the commands of Christ as coming from the King. I said yesterday that this interface (or engagement or encounter) with Christ the King is necessary to becoming a believer and to living as a believer. You can be born again having had this encounter and forget. You can draw back. This is the fruit of a degenerate heart. As much as meeting Christ as King pertains to Him abiding in us, it equally pertains to us abiding in God. So to interface with the word that is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, we have to receive the commands as coming from the King. Paul made this clear in his letter to the Romans. This is Romans 10 and verses 8 to 10. It says, 'What does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach) ... [So, there is a messenger administration proclaiming the word. It is a word of faith, and it is near you, in your mouth and in your heart if you are willing to receive it and believe it]: ...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus... [So what is confessing with your mouth the Lord Jesus? That is confessing that He is your King. You are a slave of righteousness.] ...if you confess with your mouth... [Confession with your mouth is not just saying it. We have been saying for a number of years now that the speech of faith looks like your conversation and conduct. It is the expression of your life. Is the conduct of your life reflective of Christ your King? These are the conditions of peace that we are observing.] ...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead... [That is amazing! That is what we have to believe for. We have to believe for our participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Believing has everything to do with participation in travail. Believing is not believing He exists. Believing is not just believing everything that He has done. Believing is believing for resurrection life that is your portion with Him. What does it say?] ...confess with your mouth... believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved... [A person who is making this confession and who is believing this way is someone who is walking on the pathway of salvation. If you claim to be a believer and you are not walking this way,

you are deceiving yourself because the only way to be saved is this way. That salvation looks like a whole way of living in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.] ...you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.' So baptism or immersion by receiving instruction involves receiving the commands of Christ from those whom He sends. They are the commands. This is what it means to confess that Jesus is Lord and to believe for resurrection life.

One of the designations that the Scriptures give for those who minister the word through which we are established as disciples is 'watchmen'. Obviously, we can use 'messenger' or 'presbyter', but the designation that I was quite burdened around personally and then for us all is to understand, is that the Lord sets watchmen on the walls of the city. There is a relationship here between those who are being built into the wall and the watchmen. In the Song of Solomon, Solomon called those who are set as watchmen on the walls the 'keepers of the wall'. These are the overseers of the house. Their work as stewards is to give food at the right time or to proclaim the word of present truth. In Isaiah 52 verse 8, this is what the Lord said about the watchmen. This is the characteristic (or qualification or work) of watchmen. 'Your watchmen shall lift up their voices; with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord brings back Zion.' [This is about] restoring the bride city.

I want to talk about watchmen first. The lifting up of a watchman's voice is not firstly referring to their declaration of the gospel. You would think that, but watchmen are designated as messengers and their job is to proclaim the word. So watchmen, lift up your voice and get cracking! That is not what lifting up their voices firstly means. A watchman who is lifting up his voice firstly reveals his demeanour as one who has been illuminated to the mystery of the stars in Christ's right hand and of the seven lampstands. We know that those stars are presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. When Jesus spoke of this to the apostle John, He described it as a 'mystery'. That means that what it means to be a presbytery or a star in the right hand of Christ is not understood through theology or reason or

precedent or history. It is only understood through illumination by the Holy Spirit. A lot of our church structure (even what it means to be a church which is the mystery of a lampstand) is on the back of a whole history or tradition that is not from illumination through the Holy Spirit.

Those who are called to be watchmen, if they are being illuminated, they are first seeing a mystery, and when they see it, the evidence that they have seen it is that they recognise they are *not* it. It is not that they have the qualification or the capacity or the grace or gift or whatever it is that they think qualifies them for that position. That is still someone who is confused. It reveals their demeanour as those who have been illuminated to the mystery of the stars. This is what David was talking about yesterday. It is the recognition that we are all first fallen. They see how far they have fallen from this fellowship, and they are lifting up their voices for *understanding*. A watchman is not first going, 'Gosh, I have this great book! Let us go - get cracking!' The watchmen are firstly lifting up their voices in the light of illumination going, 'I am not that. Lord, have mercy.' We know from Proverbs 9 verse 10, that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' When a watchman is beginning to lift up their voice for understanding, they want to know what the fellowship of offering that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh is. They want to be delivered to that fellowship. They desire to be established in the culture of offering that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) instead of presuming that they are acceptable or that their former traditional qualifications for leadership are the expression of the mystery. The fruit of understanding is that a person is firstly being illuminated. They are beginning to mourn and repent. They are lifting up their voice and asking to be instructed. These are the ones who are desiring the commandments of Christ, asking to be instructed.

The fruit of understanding is a fellowship of offering where watchmen begin to see eye to eye. Watchmen will not be able to meet eye to eye if they are not obtaining understanding that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh. Eye to eye means that you can meet identity to identity, name to name. For what purpose? So you can lay

your life down to reveal another's name. That is what that looks like. That is what it means to meet eye to eye; having put off their projections and the gospels sourced from their own histories and reason. This belongs to the reformation and recovery of lampstand churches. It is the bringing back of Zion. The watchmen then proclaim the word that establishes every hearer in the fellowship of Christ's death, burial and resurrection which belongs to their journey with Christ on the pathway of salvation that He pioneered.

If watchmen are being restored to being set on the walls (to be keepers of the walls because they are lifting up their voice for understanding and they are able to meet eye to eye), this is what their message will be. Isaiah 21 verse 12: 'The watchman said, "The morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire; Return! Come back!" ' That seems like a little bit of an obscure message for these ones who have been set as watchmen on the walls. What does it mean? What are they saying when they say, 'The morning comes and also the night?' The morning is when the light of a new day dawns. That is the light of resurrection life coming to walk in what is new. What precedes new life or resurrection life? What precedes the morning? An evening. The evening is the nighttime; it is the time of darkness; it is the time of death and burial. We were recently in New Zealand, and we went and did the glow worms in the cave. You go into the cave, and they turn the lights off and it is so dark, it is breathtaking. I was thinking about it at the time and I thought, 'This is what it was like for Jonah to be buried in a whale's stomach. Probably worse.' That is the evening. Watchmen are proclaiming mornings and evenings and then they are saying, 'If you will inquire...' That sounds a bit like 'if you will send a delegation asking for the conditions of peace.' The watchmen are coming from Christ saying, 'Come and inquire! Come and send a delegation. Come and ask for the conditions of peace that can rest on your house, marking you as a worthy house.' If you are going to do that, it is going to look like mornings and evenings for you. 'Inquire. Come and inquire and if you will — return and come back!' That is a demeanour of repentance and faith. That is the word of a watchman. Watchmen, individuals and families all must

meet Christ as Lord and King to be established in the fellowship through which salvation is being accomplished in our lives.

Let us look again at how Christ ministers to us this way. I am going to give just the example in the final minutes that we have. Vic has been teaching and introducing this subject of the kingship of Christ, and this is one of the fundamental examples. As I said, there are five of them. I have chosen this one in particular to illustrate the principle because in this encounter, Christ the King deals with both the disciples (or the watchmen or presbyters) and he deals with families.

This is the encounter of Christ with the father who had the demoniac son. In the second half of Christ's earthly ministry (this is probably the latter third) His focus shifted. The focus of His instruction (or His teaching) shifted towards His impending offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. This is an amazing point. We have to register that there was a change in what He was teaching. Luke 9:22: 'And He said to His disciples, "The Son of Man must suffer many things [suffer] and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and raised on the third day." ' I do not think that that was an off-the-cuff line there ...having a wander through the countryside. This is a whole block He is teaching.

Then, having taught His disciples this, (He is teaching everyone who is following Him and) He is saying this: 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' So this is the message of the King.

Christ's final statement in relation to this command, (or in relation to Luke chapter 9) was, 'I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.' This is a classic, amazing statement. He is giving this instruction to the disciples, and He is talking about taking up your cross and following Him. Then His last statement is, 'There are some of you here who are not going to die before you see the kingdom of God.' What was He referring to and whom was He referring to? He was referring to Peter, John and James, whom He took with Him up on the mountain to pray. As He was praying, He was transfigured and His body became the expression of glory. He was with Moses and Elijah who were also shining brightly

as light. And what were they talking about? They were talking about Christ's impending decease. Jesus was revealing the kingdom to Peter, James and John. He was engaging them in the conversation. This is the conversation that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh. What was it about? His impending death, burial and resurrection.

Although the disciples had been called by Jesus, there is no question that they were called to be disciples and apostles. They were called by Jesus and they were witnessing this - they are seeing it. Even though that is true, the Scriptures record that these men were 'heavy with sleep'. Heavy with sleep, indicating the weakness or infirmity of their flesh. The point to note about this is that as the word is coming, if you are in a malaise or heavy with sleep, it is going to be indicated by how you interpret the implications of the word. That is what happened with these three men. They heard Jesus speak; they are witnessing the kingdom as a fellowship revealing an offering. But they are heavy with sleep. What is the outcome of engaging with this illumination while they are infirmed with the flesh? The outcome is that they see it, and they are very keen and very energised to go and make three tabernacles for these three people. They are not asking the obvious question, 'What do you mean you are going to decease? What do we do? How do we join this? Why are we here?' They are immediately interpreting the word and this invitation to fellowship through the prism of their own carnality.

The next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a man in the midst of the crowd implored Jesus to look on his son. I love that. What is he asking? He is asking Jesus' eyes to be directed towards his son who has a serious problem. He is asking to be remembered. He asked Jesus to look on his son, saying, '...for he is my only child.' I am working through Luke chapter 9 here. This is verse 38. Then in verse 39, he explained to Jesus that a spirit seizes him. This is an unclean spirit. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out and it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. We have this child afflicted by this demonic spirit and the outcome of this affliction (or this oppression) is that the child is bruised. Jesus was bruised for

our iniquity. This demonic oppression upon this child was probably likely the fruit of the father's iniquity, which gave access to that demonic spirit to persecute and trouble his own child. He said, 'He is my only son. This is my fruit. Look on me, Lord.' So we have a man who is in iniquity. (Iniquity means 'going astray'. It is deviating, going our own way, leaning on our own understanding, giving rise to access for the principalities and powers to afflict this household) The demonic spirit was only able to do this through the misappropriation of authority. It may well have been a familiar spirit that was misappropriating the very authority that belonged to this man in his house because of his iniquity. He was departing from the truth (or his sanctification) as either the head of his wife or the father in the house. Having requested the attention of the Lord and detailed the oppressive effect of this spirit upon his son, the man then said to Jesus, 'I implored your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.' 'We have this oppression in the house. I implored your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.' So the question would be, 'Why were the disciples unable to do this?' They had done it previously; they had been participating in the Christ's healing ministry. What was Jesus' response? He said, 'Oh faithless... [that word literally means 'unbelieving'] ...Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you?' This is the indignation of the King. 'How long should I bear with you? You are faithless and perverse.' Perversity is 'going astray because of unbelief'.

Christ's statement was not an expression of impatience or exasperation. Rather it was the word of a King rebuking a generation that was unbelieving. Their unbelief was the cause of their perversity as they did not know Christ's ways, and they continued to go astray in their heart. This was the cause of stumbling for the disciples. It is interesting that after this account (when Mark recorded this), it says that Jesus said, 'If you have faith, nothing will be impossible', saying to the disciples, 'You did not have faith. This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.' I would often have read that and gone, 'Oh, gosh, if only they knew. They should have gone without a sandwich for the day!' But the prayer and fasting is the fast that Jesus has chosen. It is

not the fasting to service or satisfy our own desires or wants. It is joining *His* fast, which is to loose the bonds of wickedness. That is in Isaiah 58. That whole description there is the fast that we are to continue to join. He was not saying, 'Oh, do not worry about it. If you had had a fast, it would have worked.' He is saying, 'You had no faith because you are not listening to what I am saying and you are not joined to My fast. That is why you had no capacity to minister the word that would bring deliverance to this household from this familiar spirit.'

We as watchmen, we need to receive the commands of the King and become believing too, so that the word that we proclaim does minister deliverance to households that will receive the word, so that they can find relief from the bondage that belongs to these unclean spirits.

Jesus calls the father to bring the child. He asks him, 'Do you believe? If you believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' The father immediately cries, 'Lord... [immediately] ...Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!' This is the response that we are to make as the command of the King is coming. We do believe, but we recognise that we need help. 'Help my unbelief.' That is a meek response - receiving with meekness, the word. As the man approached Christ, the demon threw the boy down and convulsed him. It was as if the demon spirit was endeavouring to rebel in the presence of Christ. The King rebuked this insubordinate spirit, healed the child and gave him back to the father.

Now rebuking an unclean spirit and commanding it to come out of the person is a kingly action. It addresses the demon's usurping of the identity of the person through its illegitimate appropriation of authority. This demon had stolen an authority that does not belong to it because the man had given access to that demon through his iniquity. It is a thief that comes to steal and to misappropriate authority in order to kill and destroy. However, Jesus came to destroy the power of the devil which is misappropriated through our unbelief. He does this through His death and by giving to us His resurrection life as we join Him in His death. The word is delivering us to that. It says that 'all who witnessed this miracle were amazed at the majesty of God.' This was the manifestation of

the King through this interaction both with the disciples and with this boy.

It is a bit sad that this ends the way it does because Christ had spoken to the disciples, teaching them about His decease, spoken to their followers, 'Come and follow me'; 'Take up your cross'; He had gone up and revealed the kingdom through the transfiguration; demonstrated this expression of the majesty of the kingship of Christ; and what happens to those disciples? They get empowered by this demonstration of majesty and their next discussion is an argument over who is the greatest. I do not think it is like a playground tiff about who is the best cricketer. I think this was 'who needs to hear from whom?' These are not people who are seeing eye to eye. But the Lord did have mercy, and they did join the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, and they were able then to make disciples of the nations. Praise the Lord.