

The Ultimate Satisfaction



From Time to Eternity (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'm going to continue and complete the theme we've been studying this week: "From Time to Eternity."

I do trust that my talks on this theme have been helpful to you. In my previous talks I've explained that there is an eternal element in man, breathed into him by God at creation. Through man's rebellion, he was cut off from God's eternal being, but through receiving Christ he can be spiritually reborn, not a physical birth, but a spiritual birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but spirit gives birth to spirit." So this is through receiving Jesus we can be spiritually reborn by the Spirit of God from above.

From rebirth onward, man is subjected to an ongoing inner tension: his regenerated spirit reaches out toward God and spiritual things; but his fleshly nature still binds him to this world and to material things.

In my talk yesterday I explained how God uses this tension to wean us from time to eternity. He allows us to enjoy the beauty of the temporal, then He Himself causes it to wither. In this way He directs us to the eternal: His Word and its promises. I gave various examples: the beauty of a rose that buds and blooms and withers; or the enjoyment we receive from our pets, a dog or a cat that we really treasure and yet after about 10 or 15 years we are faced with that agonizing decision to keep it alive and let it suffer or to have it put away; and then on an altogether different level, human fellowship with a dear friend or a spouse and after many years of sweet fellowship one dies and the other is left lonely, bereaved, empty.

There is an answer. If we continue to focus only on the temporal at such a point, the result will be cynicism. This is exemplified by Solomon in Ecclesiastes who turned away from the eternal, the spiritual, looked only at the things under the sun, and came to that sad conclusion, "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." That word occurs 36 times in those 12 chapters, because the phrase "under the sun" occurs 29 times. When we look only at that which is "under the sun" our ultimate conclusion is vanity, futility, frustration. But if we receive the revelation of God's Word by faith, then

our reborn spirit is liberated from the things of time and finds its true home in the eternal, spiritual realm.

In my talk today I'm going to point you forward to the ultimate satisfaction which God has provided for man's reborn spirit. But first let's look at some words of the apostle Paul in which, out of his own experience, he vividly describes this tension in which we find ourselves: between the eternal and the temporal, the spiritual and the material. And we have to understand that at times, God uses affliction to turn us toward the eternal. This is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18:

> "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

So it all depends on which way we look. When affliction comes, if we look at the things which are seen, we become cynical, we become disappointed. But if we look at the eternal things revealed in the Word of God, then we are lifted up and we are weaned from time to eternity. It all depends on which way we look. In the next chapter Paul speaks further about this tension, 2 Corinthians 5:4-8:

> "For indeed while we are in this tent [that's this physical body], we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. [That's the tension to get out of the mortal into the eternal.] Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit [the Holy Spirit] as a pledge. [You see, God prepared us for this thing. It's God that's doing it. And then Paul goes on:] Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, For we walk by faith, not by sight, we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."

That's the alternative, to be at home with the Lord and absent from the body or be at home in the body and absent from the Lord. That's the tension. But remember, God Himself has prepared us for this, to move out of the temporal into the eternal. And He's given us the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, as a pledge. That word "pledge" is a very interesting word. It's a Semitic word: it's found in Hebrew; in Arabic; it's found in Greek; it's even found in Swahili, in the language of East Africa. I'll tell you a little story to illustrate.

Once, a good many years ago, my first wife and I were living in Jerusalem and we wanted to by some material for curtains. So we went to the Old City, we found the store, we looked at the material, and we decided we need twenty yards of a certain material which we will say was $5.00 a yard. Now I didn't have very much money with me, but I said to the shopkeeper, "This is the material we want. It will cost us $100.00. I'll give you $20.00 as a deposit and then we will come back tomorrow and pay the rest and collect the material. Meanwhile," I said, "you put the material aside. Don't let anybody else even look at it. It's sold to us. Here's the deposit." Can you guess what the word "deposit" was? It was that word, "pledge."

And so you see, God gives us the Holy Spirit as a pledge. He makes a down payment and that's His guarantee that He's coming back with the rest. And meanwhile, we're set apart to Him, we're set apart to eternity. We're not available for any other purpose. See that? It's God who has put the Holy Spirit in you as a pledge of eternal redemption.

For another beautiful picture of what God has prepared for us in the eternal realm, we'll turn to Psalm 17:15:

> "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake."

That's the prospect before every true believer, to fall asleep in death but to awake in glory, satisfied with the likeness of the Lord. For the Bible says we shall be changed into the same likeness. I have a book, Chords from David's Harp, in which I've commented on that particular passage and I'd like in closing to read to you my comment on those verses:

> "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake."

Now this is my comment:

What beautiful words! What a beautiful expectation! It is the expectation of every true believer, one that extends beyond the end of time and out into eternity. We will fall asleep in death, but one day we will awake. And when we awake, we will be satisfied, satisfied with the likeness of the Lord. We will find ourselves clothed with His righteousness. We will put on His likeness. We will behold His face.

That one word "satisfied" sounds a chord in the depths of my being. I like to repeat it to myself. "I will be satisfied, satisfied,

fully satisfied!" For this I am prepared both to work and to wait, if need be, to suffer also.

I do not believe there is anything else that can fully satisfy the human heart, except God Himself. At this time, in this life, as believers, we have contact with God, we know Him, we serve Him, we do His will. But there are gaps in the revelations. There is a veil in between. We are still creatures of flesh. Our ideas and our concepts are so limited, and so inadequate to apprehend God.

But there is coming a day when we will awake clothed in His righteousness, not in our own, to stand faultless before His throne and to see Him face-to-face. And then we will be satisfied! Nothing else can take the place of that. That is the end of all living. It all ends in God Himself.

"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen" (Jude 24-25).

And then at the end of that I have what I call "Faith's Response." How do we respond to this challenge and to this promise? This is the response that I have suggested there in my book:

> "Lord, I renounce any earthly satisfaction that would rob me of the satisfaction of beholding Your face in righteousness."

I believe that's what God is doing for us. He's permitting us to glimpse the beauty of the things of time: to enjoy them, to taste them. But always He's reminding us, "That's not permanent. It's not going to last. Don't fix your affections ultimately on that." Sometimes it takes tribulation, it takes sorrow, it takes disappointment to wean us from the things of time, and to turn our eyes fully and finally to the things of eternity. But I want to tell you all in closing this series, there is only one place you can find ultimate satisfaction, that's in the eternal realm, in God Himself. There's something in you that God placed there that will never be satisfied with less. You can run after pleasure, success, fame, money, whatever it is, you'll gain some temporary satisfaction, but ultimately it will wither and you'll be frustrated. And you'll end, maybe like Solomon, a cynic.

But if you'll follow the example and warning of Paul and don't look at the things of time but look at the things of eternity, then every suffering and every affliction is working for you an eternal and exceeding weight of glory.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another rich and exciting theme from the Word of God.

My special offer this week is my book Chords from David's Harp. That's the one that I read from. This beautiful, hardcover, illustrated book opens up the inner secrets of the Psalms. You'll find in it new strength, courage and inspiration for living. The title again, Chords from David's Harp.

Also, my complete series of talks this week; "From Time to Eternity," is available in a single, carefully edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

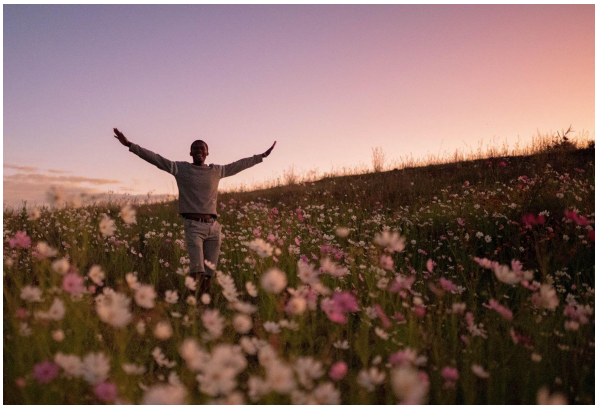
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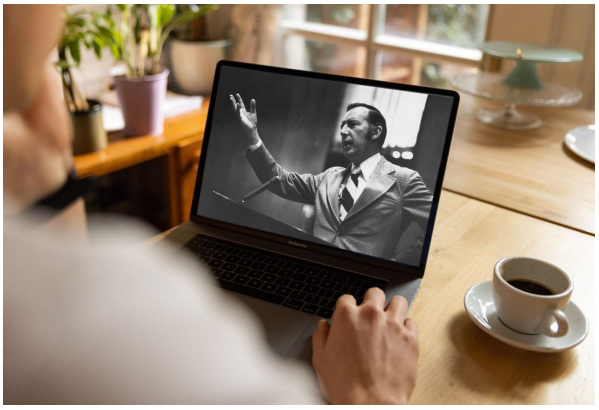
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