

So John chapter 15 – I'll try to get my head on straight – laughing.

Verse 7 –

“If you abide in Me and My word abides in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.”

The discipline of abiding is that we **learn to live in Christ not in our circumstances** and there are times when our circumstances are dire. I certainly know what that feels like in my own life. When some situation that you're in, like for me went on for twelve years, the one thing you realize is that time has no relevance to God. How do you deal with a God Who thinks that a thousand years is like one day? So twenty years is like about 29 minutes if you do the math. And for part of that time I'm crying out to the Lord, “You know, why is it taking so long?” He says, “Like I don't measure time, I measure growth.” And **God doesn't measure the success of something by what you achieve.** Some times He measures it by the faithfulness that you display.

Ezekiel was given a word right at the start of his ministry; “I'm sending you to a people group who will never listen to a blame word you say.” How would you like that as a prophecy when you're just starting out? How do you measure his success? There wasn't any. No visible success. **So what is his real success? It lies in the fact that faithfully for over twenty years he stood up and prophesied the Word of the Lord in the purest way possible, to a people group who totally opposed him, were always against him and never listened to him;** Faithfulness.

So what it all comes down to is you have to serve an audience of ONE. And you know we're all familiar with doing things and sometimes you know that part of us that is yet to come under the rule of the Holy Spirit wants to be recognized. 'Cause the world is about fame, it's about recognition; it's about achievement; about being seen. People do things to be seen. There's a very subtle and elegant test that God brings into your life is when **He takes away from you any capacity for recognition, He denies it to you.** But He gives you Himself, and He says: “There's only one person you have to satisfy and that's Me.” You have to learn how to serve an audience of One, and **if you can make Him happy then everything else actually is quite irrelevant.** That's a hard one.

And some times when you're learning about the faithfulness of God there's no breakthrough for extended periods of time. Twelve years in this thing; it'll come to an end for me in a few months time. Twelve years. And in the end you realize that **everything is just about the goodness of God.** I set my heart; not on surviving....I was in survival mode for awhile....and the Lord says: “What if I

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want you to do more than survive? What if this is your defining moment Graham, when I am trying to make you into the man you're suppose to be and all you're doing is bothered about results and looking good?" And so it's stepping back from all of that and coming to a place of understanding the faithfulness of God for you. The day in day out, week in and week out when everyone else walks away – God steps in close. And you learn that, and you learn what it is to really walk with the lord and have His approval. But he doesn't shout about you, He doesn't confirm to anybody else what He's doing in your heart, your life, He's silent to everybody. But He's not silent to you. That's because **at the end of the day he doesn't really care much about your reputation** and it becomes one more thing on a list of things that you have to die to. Cause actually it is quite irrelevant. What is relevant is that you serve an audience of ONE. What is relevant is that you're seen by the One Person that matters, and if the whole world never sees anything what's that to do with Him? It's nothing. You learn faithfulness, that God will not leave you nor forsake you. And you some times just have to kneel down and kiss the hand that hurts. And sometimes you just have to submit to a purpose of God that's killing you, but it's meant to. That's what it's there for. And all the prayers you ever prayed about dying to self and I want to live for you all come back to haunt you. And so you do all your crying in private and all your smiling in public and you're not a hypocrite; because you show your clown face to God.

I wrote a poem years ago that all prophets are clowns. You know you come into places and you get breakthroughs for people and they experience incredible experiences with God, and your trial is just running and running and running. And you're in a prison cell giving out breakthroughs that other people get out of prison and you're still in jail. And you're like a comedian who – a clown who makes everyone laugh while you're crying on the inside. Except God understands every tear you shed, and it's precious to Him, for **He denies you the one thing you most want because He's trying to teach you that the one thing you really most want is Him**. So in the end it all comes down to priorities. Who is God for you? And what is it you want from the Lord? Let God be God.

You learn to live in the favor of God when nobody else favors you. And your life is a soap opera. You know you feel like you are the subject of a continuous kiss and tell convention. Your life is like a Christian tabloid. It's like the National Inquirer has come to the church and you're the headline. In those days, in those times you get to know Who God really is, and what He is for you. And God comes to you at surprising times and in surprising ways and kisses you. And there are times when I've cried on His shoulder and He has wept into my hair. And I wouldn't give that

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moment up for all the tea in China. I really wouldn't because when you serve an audience of One, you GET an audience WITH One. That's the deal. It's a private thing and you can never talk about it in detail. It's private.

There are moments that you can have with God that make everything worth while. And to have what I have now in Christ I would have gone through something four times worse, because I have the bargain of the century. It just cost me twelve years of pain. I'd have paid fifty to have what I have. And to come out of it not having survived it merely, but to have prospered in it, to have grown in it, is like the best and the biggest gift that God could ever give me.

God is serious about you. He's serious about you, serious enough to introduce you to a high place by squeezing you through a low one. Serious enough about this life He wants to give you, by being **determined and focused to kill everything in you that will prevent you from experiencing that life**. Jealous! You don't know the half of it. He's jealous **to give you a quality of life that is beyond your wildest dreams**. But there's a price to pay and while you're paying it - it's hard – on the other side you look back and oh my God, it was cheap!! Think I'd have experienced something way worse to have this, oh my God! I'd go through all that and more.

Two things God is doing in you. One He wants to bring you to a place where **you can trust Him for everything**. And we're all every day, every week, we're all learning the lessons of trust. Too much month, not enough money; you're leaning to trust the Lord. Every day we're learning how to trust Him. It's so important to God that you trust him; so important to Him that His word is everything to you. It's your breath; it's your food; it's your water; it's your life. And the second thing He's doing, **He's bringing you to a place where He can trust you** with something. He's got something majestic in mind for you. He needs to trust you. He needs to know what your integrity levels gonna be. He needs to know that you've got the character that can handle the thing He most wants to give you. And **every test that we ever go through in life is about those two things**.

- 1) **Your trust in the Lord and**
- 2) **His trust in you.**

Are you gonna stand? Are you gonna quit? Are you going to cut your integrity in half and go for expedience? When you take the lesser road are you gonna grab something and run? He has to

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know who you are. He has to know what you'll do. He has to know if He can trust you. He has to know if He can trust you so that He can release that prophetic word that will catapult you into a whole new dimension. He has to know stuff about you. And more importantly you have to know it about yourself. And everything comes down to that critical point of crucifixion; **are you really willing to crucify your old life; to say no to yourself; to live in self denial?** He has to know that about you and **you have to know it about yourself.** Are you gonna set a limit on your faith, on your development? Are you gonna worship or are you gonna whine? I was a whiner. The Lord said to me one day: "You know it would be a great blessing to Me, if you'd just quit moaning. You know, your whining, your voice is irritating Me. You're whining Graham. You're a whiner!" "Yeah, but it hurts!" "Yeah well quit whining it's supposed to hurt. How about worshipping instead? **What if you could worship and the pain might reduce, decrease; it's worth a try.**"

He has to know what He has in you. And then He has to know where he can deploy you. Can He put you in the forefront of the battle or is really the best place for you at the back with the baggage? Are you a warrior, or a chocolate soldier? Are you gonna melt when the pressures on, when the heat's on? We have to know these things, we have a battle to fight; we have a country to save. We have a world to invest with the gospel. We're not messing around here. He's not playing at church. We have demons to go up against. We have things to do. This is serious business; this is serious life; **this is not about you and your blessing.** It's about you and your calling. Who are you? What are you here for? Are you ever gonna achieve the purpose of God over your life? Are you always gonna quit when the going gets a bit tough? What's in your heart?

David was a man after God's own heart no matter what. God exclaimed about Caleb, "He's a man of a different Spirit!" His was different than anybody else in his generation, even different than Joshua; I think better than Joshua. I don't think Joshua could have done what he did without Caleb by his side. When they came back from spying out the land Joshua didn't say anything for twenty four hours. It was Caleb who stood up, took the brunt of everything and went for it. Joshua kept his own counsel. Caleb stepped into that gap didn't care what was going to happen. Joshua, a bit more considered, came in the next day, better late than never. Caleb was the man after God's own heart.

So I wonder what heaven's going to say about you on this earth. What are the words God will speak over you? "Daniel, o man, greatly beloved!" – Why? Because He was a lover of God! What

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about his three compatriots, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; they were three tasty guys. Knowing that if they refused the edict of Nebuchadnezzar they were gonna die. So they got together and they worked out beforehand what their answer was going to be, and they went into that meeting with Nebuchadnezzar determined to say no, no matter what. They knew what the end result would be, and they said to him, "God is able to deliver us O King from your hands, but even if He doesn't we are sooo not going to bow the knee to this thing. And they knew that this public refusal – it wasn't a private audience, he was there to make an example of them.....their public refusal, was a death sentence.

All the best people in the Spirit have a pre-determined response and they stick to it. "This is me. This is what I'm gonna do. I'm sticking to it!"

And so he heats up the fire seven times higher till the guys who opened the door get burned to a crisp as they throw them in. And they enter into the most incredible experience imaginable; walking around in a furnace that is super heated, but Jesus is in there. Not even the smell of smoke on their clothes. And when the King looks in he just almost has heart failure. And they come out of that place and take the whole nation! You can dream about things like that beloved....you really can.

What if God wants you to be the one? Would you rather be one of Gideon's 300...or one of the rest who left? Wouldn't you want to be someone that other people tell stories about, rather than the one who tells stories about other people? For the rest of their lives....."Yep Dude, I was one of the 300. I was there. That was me. I was the one who said, "I can't play the trumpet", that was my little line in the movie. I was there. And we went out and we were out numbered four hundred to one, and we totally kicked some butt. I was there. Yeah if you buy me lunch I'll tell you all about it."

Who do you want to be? Who do you want to be? All your tests are about you becoming magnificent. They're all about your development. They're all about you becoming the man or woman you are suppose to become; all your tests.

"Ask what you will." There is a place of favor set aside for us, and you have to inhabit that place yourself. Now when you have developed the art of abiding you'll never have a problem knowing the will of God. Because abiding means your heart is fixed on God, Who He is and what He wants. It's

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not fixed on what you want or what you need. Your heart gets fixed on Who God is and what he wants, what He requires. There is a transformation that occurs that involves the knowledge of what God likes and what He loves, and you become determined to give Him that. Some times in that place of suffering and denial, your heart becomes attuned to His heart and you develop a God consciousness in your thinking and your perception. Some times when you are going through some thing that is just allowed and therefore ordained by God, and it's painful and hurtful you have to create a value that is greater than your pain and live in it.

Abiding enables us to rest in the peace of God and it's a funny thing about resting you know because when you're really under stress, great stress, and you're in that place of rest, your heart rate actually slows down and you move away from reactive behavior to responsive, and you loose the ability to be prone to panic, or fear or speculation and the mind of Christ begins to be established through your peace and your rest. You start thinking the way He thinks; you start to see things the way He sees things; and our perspective is more acute and we naturally discern the will of the Lord.

So Jesus says, "Come in here and ask what you will." It's not that God is taking a risk; He's giving an invitation for you to have a mature connection with Him. You know God wants to be in all your thoughts; and His intention is to lift our thinking to a higher level of relationship that enables us to interpret His heart. That's why I'm so convinced that the language He uses is the language of promise. It's the language of faith; it's the language of confession; declaration; proclamation; confidence! God wants you to be confident in Him. And to come through everything knowing that you're in Christ and highly favored, even when the thing you most want doesn't happen, because somebody else's will is involved and God will not trespass on their will. The thing you most want can't happen, because it's not willed. "God works in us both to will and to do..." and your will is the vehicle for your faith. So when you look in scripture at all the great guys and women of faith, they all knew how to use their will. "I will bless the Lord." "I will lift my eyes to the hills from whence comes my help." Your will is the vehicle for your spirituality. And your will is cold blooded, it has no emotion attached to it what so ever; your will rules your emotions, so to "will" is to make an unemotional choice.

As former Prime Minister Golda Meier use to say that, "I was for something whether it worked out or not. If I thought something was right I would live for it whether it worked out or not." I like

that. That's a will that's chosen something.

You know we live in a day where people are climbing down from integrity all the time. We're living in days right now where opinion polls matter more than truth, and politicians watch the polls and you know...go accordingly where ever those polls are, courting popularity, not realizing they're giving something up that's way more powerful. The Bible puts it this way:

"Let your yes be yes and your no be no."

(And to hell with the rest.....doesn't say that last bit that was me. That was me. That will be my quote that never made it into the Bible.)

Paul put it this way in Ephesians 1:17....he says.....

"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory...(in other words, the Father of glory means – the One Who has a glorious character and personality)....that he may give to you a Spirit (a spirit, which is the Holy Spirit within)...a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Him. (in the circumstance that you are in.)

And that's what you hold on to. And when every body else stops holding on to you, that's what you hold on to; until it's burned into your soul. Until it's burned into your thinking and you don't let go because there's no other place to go. "To Whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life."

There are some times beloved when you just have to take a grip on God, close your eyes and not let go. And that's it and it's not about time, it ceases to be about time; it's just about knowing God's heart beat. It's just about laying your head on His chest; it's about crying into His shoulder and feeling Him weep into your hair. It's just about being held. And every one of us in this life has to come to a place of having a brilliant relationship with the Holy Spirit as comforter. There are not too many of us in this room that really know the full depth of what the Comforter is in the Person of the Holy Spirit. It's because we are so use to cutting and running; so use to giving up; so use to being passive in our responses. We go so far, we endure so much and then we give up. Why did I have twelve years of something, I had to learn what it's like to be comforted by the Comforter. For me it was about developing a brilliant relationship with the Holy Spirit and understanding Who He really is and what He's really like. And why did Jesus say, "Guys it's better for you if I go away." And they're all going, "No it's not. We need You to hang around for a hundred years or at least until

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I'm dead." "No guys, honestly, it is better for you if I go away. Why...What's He saying? The Holy Spirit is better than Me in this next phase of your life. You need Him to come; I need Him to come into your life and when He comes He'll show you who I really am; and He is your comforter.

And it is so important if we are going to live in high places of favor comfort is gonna be one of the things that gets you there. To know the comfort of God when nobody else has got a good word to say to you hardly; and even your friends on days are mystified and then some of them let go of you because it's too embarrassing and you have to know who the Holy Spirit is; you have to be comforted. And there are times when only He can do it. And so you have to come to a place of dependency on Him as comforter, and when you come to that place and you live through that place and you take that onboard....then you can come into a higher place of favor.

Study all the great men and women in the Bible, all the heroes of faith that you see in Hebrews, some of those people never saw what they were believing for, but they believed. Revelatory understanding opens our eyes, specifically the eyes of our heart. It is so important that you think with your heart and not your head. When you got saved you didn't invite Jesus into your head. You invited Him into your heart; and you have to see with the eyes of your heart; and you have to think with your heart; and you have to understand your place in His affection, especially when you're not getting affection anywhere else.

Enlightenment – the eyes of your heart be enlightened – enlightenment is perception unlimited, it goes on and on and once you get touched with that Spirit of enlightenment you can't NOT see. It's like you live in the dark so you get to see in the dark. It's perception unlimited. And no matter where you are or what's occurring you can see now. Perception; enlightenment; it's our capacity to see our place in the earth through the eyes of God moving in kingdom purpose. And revelation leads to process and most of us are just looking for an outcome. We get into situations and we want to get out of them as quickly as possible. We're looking for an outcome. It's the process that makes you rich. It's that series of steps. It's not about the destination, it's about the journey! It's about how you walk with God. It's about what you see; it's about what you become on that journey. It's about a road less traveled. On that road you get to loose yourself and you get to find God. Yea, you get to die for sure, but you sooo get to live; and you get burned, but you get healed. And in the end it's about, it's not about what people do; it's about who you become. It's not about the wounded ness; it's about how quickly you can get healed. And it's about stopping whining.

I'm gonna get wounded a lot more before I'm done; I plan to get healed real quick each time; cause I don't have a right to be wounded, I have a right to be healed. So I'm getting healed. But that's not my real destination, my real destination is to get to a place that exists in 1 Corinthians 13 where it says, "Love doesn't recognize when others do it wrong." That's the place I'm going to, where you can say something and do something and it didn't connect. I didn't get it! You can be cynical and it just goes over my head, I didn't get it! You can be hurtful and I never got it. Why? Because I want to be a contribution. I want to love in a way that is greater than anything I can imagine.

I want to be like God in that regard. I don't want to talk about being wounded cause all I'm doing is showcasing my immaturity. I want to be a blessing; I want to move in the opposite spirit to what's coming against me; I want to bless those who persecute me; I want to pray for those who use me and abuse me; I don't want to be scared of being persecuted and abused. I've gone into something's with my eyes wide open and people have said to me, "You know, that guys gonna take you to the cleaners. I'm thinking, yea, but at least I'll be clean. More than anything I want to be whole-hearted. I don't want to be half-hearted about myself; about my friends. I don't want to be half-hearted about the enemy; half-hearted about God. I want to be whole-hearted if that means I get abused I'm available. I'll just get healed.

There is something I want more than to just avoid pain, I want something more. You get one shot at this life, and beloved this is not a dress rehearsal, you're on stage. What are you gonna do? Question is right now, who do you want to be? What do you want to become? And if you want the favor of God, pay for it and SHUT UP! And I say that in the nicest possible way; shut up and pay for it, and think yourself fortunate that it only cost you that. Take something up in God that is majestic that really represents His majesty and Who He really is. We're in Christ and we are highly favored. Favor means answers to prayer; request granted; calling things the same as God does; it's the capacity to proclaim the name of the Lord. It's the anointing to walk in the knowledge of what God is doing.

I discovered in the last twelve years, that my circumstances were not about what I thought they were about. Primarily all your circumstances are personal, even when they involve someone else. It's about you becoming the person you're supposed to be regardless of whether you win or lose.

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It's about the anointing to contend with the enemy and prevail; like Joshua praying for the sun to stand still for 24 hours. What a boy hey?! Cause he so wanted this win. Just give me one more day.

Favor means we can grow to a place of on going maturity and be trusted with the high things of the Lord. I hope to God that He trusts you with something brilliant. I hope for your sake you can be trusted with something astonishing. Do you know what I learned in this last twelve years? I learned to have a radiant idea of God. I never got what I wanted, I lost it, but I got something I wasn't even thinking about and I'm all the richer for it; a radiant idea of God. I got to be comforted by the Holy Spirit and I got to know Him. And I can't tell you the difference that has made in my life, to who I am as a person. "My Father is glorified by this that you bare much fruit. So prove to be My disciples."

Sooner or later we're all gonna get the message that everything in your life comes down to the glory of God. What have you seen about Him that makes your life glorious? What have you seen? What is God inviting you into? What is it He wants to show you about Himself? God invited Moses up into a mountain, and He got Moses to pray, "Show me Your glory." And the Father said, "I will cause My goodness to pass before you. But you can't look at My face, but I'll show you My back." So Moses is the first person in history to get to see God's butt. (He didn't look too big in that robe.)

If you are gonna be anybody you have to see the glory of God for yourself. Don't go to a conference to see it, cause you won't. It's not an event. It's a personal transaction. God's glory is in His nature and His character towards you. I'll cause My goodness to pass before you and you can see it and touch it and it'll turn your hair grey or white.

The thing I like about God is He seeks to blend His nature with our governed desires. When you live in the will of God your desires are governed by His heart for you and over you. He knows best and He plans best. And the best form of life with God is a submitted one. "Not my will but Yours be done." (The Lord's saying, "I like that quote.") God's looking for a place of unbroken intimacy; that we come to a place of honoring and blessing and praising Him because of His divine nature.

You know people draw near to the Lord when they see His goodness and He has manifested in you when He is magnified by you. You want the Presence of God, magnify Him. You want the

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Presence of God rejoice always; give thanks in everything; love the person next to you. You want the Presence of God don't go to a conference. Do the simple things; do the simple things. Give thanks always; rejoice always; love the person next to you; practice love; work out what you're responses are going to be before you need them. Say no in your heart before sin knocks at the door, not afterwards. When people see God they marvel at Him, they are astonished at Him and when people behold His beauty they want to change themselves. And it's so important that you look at people as God sees them. You can ruin a persons life by having a perception of them; or you can make a persons life by having a perception of them.

Jesus comes walking into a village and the most hated man in that community is up a tree, Zacchaeus. This guy is like the most obnoxious little rat you've ever met in your life. He has defrauded that whole community. He's not up a tree because he was small and can't see above the crowd, he's up the tree for protection because he knows if he stands still for more than two or three minutes in a crowd somebody's gonna stick a knife between his third and fourth ribs. Everyone hates him. Yet there's something in him that's looking for something and so he scrambles up a tree cause he's heard about this Jesus and he's wondering about Him. I think a lot of people out there are wondering about Him. Does He love me? Does He really care about me? Does He see me? Does He know me? Everyone in the village – it's approaching dusk – everyone in that village wants Jesus to dine, to eat at their house, to stay at their home over night. Why? Cause you can dine out for a year on the story. "Ok take me out to lunch and I'll tell you about the night Jesus stopped by." So Jesus wandering through that community, knowing what people were thinking, cause He always knows, sees Zacchaeus up a tree and the thing about Jesus is He connects with your heart, He connects with your deepest longings and desires. He looks at Zacchaeus and He doesn't see the guy who defrauded every body, who's hateful, who's spiteful, who totally doesn't care about any body except himself and his own wealth....Sees beyond that and He sees the longing in Zacchaeus' heart for love. Everyone on earth has the same human needs; the need to be loved; the need to belong and the need to be significant.

Jesus looked into his heart and sees the longing and just calls out Zacchaeus come down for I must eat with you this evening, and He honors the one person that every body else hates. In the time it takes for Zacchaeus to get out of that tree and scuffles up to Jesus' side, something is changed in his heart, and the first thing he says is, "I want to give half my goods to the poor and everyone I've defrauded I want to pay them back four times as much." And so the whole village

wins the Lottery. The whole village their quality of life is incredibly improved for the whole community because Jesus just said one sentence. Astonishing.

"I only say what My Father is saying. I only do what My Father is doing." Jesus came to put a face on God. We are here to put a face on Christ. One sentence and that whole community win the Lottery. And can you imagine the days afterwards when Jesus has left and moved on, there's Zacchaeus walking around to all the houses of the people he's defrauded knocking on the door, people opening it and there's the most hated person in their life, this is the reason they are poor; and he stands there on the threshold of your house with tears in his eyes and he says, "I am so sorry for what I did to you and I know I can't make it up and I'm not trying, but I want you to have this." And he gives you back four times what you lost and he's just taken your family out of poverty, out of survival into prosperity. Can you imagine all the poor people that he's not defrauded because they actually had nothing to take, all being called to the local bank and the bank manager says, "There's a benefactor who's just given me this amount of money and I'm gonna divide it between all of you." Even the poor come into a place of having plenty; just a legacy of Jesus that comes through one sentence. That's power I think. And here He says greater things than these will you do; greater things.

I was in Africa one time and we'd flown right out into the bush. It was one of those deals where you fly in and walk out. You fly in and you walk out three, four hundred miles preaching the gospel as you go and we came to this one area where the village had no water and the soil was poor; they were just barely subsisting. And I'm standing there and in those contexts you have to earn the right to preach. So the Elders come out to greet you and they have nothing to give you and they're embarrassed. I'm standing there and they're standing there and I'm saying Father what on earth can I give? And all I hear in my heart is, "Son take some shovels and walk a day and a half west and take some men with you." We take shovels we walk a day and a half west and the Lord says dig in this place. We dug down a hundred feet and we found water. And you know well digging is like the worst job in the world. To be a hundred feet in the earth in a hole that may be eight feet square and there's no air down there and you need a bunch of guys up there who are going to haul you out right quick because when water comes you better be ready to move your backside really fast. (There was one time I was in a well and I found water and the water overtook me coming out and the last like thirty feet I'd like taken one breath and that was it and I just shot out like water from a cannon. It was kind of cool.) Anyway, now you move the whole village to that place, and the

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whole village comes to Christ and you don't even preach a message. There's stuff out there that's interesting to do.

My question is, is there a Spirit of adventure in this place that would make you wanna go there? Well it starts in terms of who you are. Who do you wanna be? My question for twelve years in my life is: "How do you love when love is not returned?" That was my question. "Graham, how do you love when love is not returned?" Well, the short answer is, love doesn't seek a return. Love loves for the sake of loving. That's it. But the reality is you create a value that's greater than your pain. And my value was, I am what I love not what loves me. And its not about what comes back to you, what you receive, it's about what you give. It's about you being a contribution; it's about you becoming love whether love is given back or not. I am what I love not what loves me. There are places where God wants to take us. Each one of us has something only you can do, but before you can really do them you have to become someone, and everything in your daily life is about becoming that person so that God can trust you with something.

In our present circumstances right now they are about finding and holding on to God like grim death, not letting go of Him. I know some of us in this room are in dire circumstances, I know what that feels like. I know what it feels like to loose pretty much of everything and have to start all over again. You don't want to go through that more than once. You know these present circumstances when they're set against what God wants you to become, it's nothing. We badly need in North American to stop playing at Christianity and become the real deal. Stop messing around in pews; stop playing with walking with God and get serious about the kind of life you want; the kind of man you want to become; the kind of woman you want to be. There is a grace here for every one of us that's all sufficient. There's a life that God wants to give you that you have to give up the one that you have, and some times you just have to kneel down and kiss the hand that hurts. Not my will but Yours be done, and whether it comes through God doing something or your own stupidity or other people betraying you, who really cares...as long as it comes.

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, sold as a slave, then thrown into prison, ends up leading the most powerful nation on earth through a time of transition. All the way along he never lost sight of Who God was. And even when he's reconciled with his brothers, the grace on him is so extraordinary that three times he says to them; "Guys," (and they're trying to apologize to him.) three times... "It wasn't you, it was God! It wasn't you. Trust me guys, it wasn't you. It was God."

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Some of you are sitting here today and your blaming other people for where you are. Get over it! Get off it! That line of thought is condemning you to a place you don't want to be in! Get off it! Either Jesus is Lord or He's not! Make a decision! It wasn't you, it was God. Behind every thing is the fine hand of God. Why am I saying these things? It's kind of like a little sober meeting because I think there are some champions out there; think there are some warriors out there. And there are the equivalents of David's mighty men out there. We need to breed such people for such a time as this.

So who are the ones that are years into an experience that you hate, would you just stand up? Yea, I know. I know, my heart goes out to you, but you know what paradox-ically I'm glad for you. My heart goes out to you but I can't help but be pleased, and I wonder what it is God wants to trust you with? Yeah, that makes all this worth while. But you all need to quit whining, yea, because all your friends are fed up for one thing; they all want to give you some five fold ministry and put you to sleep for now so they can get some peace. Yeah. The situation you are in beloved is this; it is the most defining moment of your life, right now, right here in Grace Church haply named for such a moment as this. This is the most defining moment of your life, cause in this moment you get to say, "Yes Lord." See we've made Him Savior but we're learning to make Him Lord, and it is about you recognizing that I'm in the winepress of God and I'm being squeezed and God has got His hand on me and it hurts right now but there's a place He wants to take me to that is the stuff of dreams. But He's not messing around, He so plans to kill you. He has plans to kill you. He's gonna kill your flesh and he's not apologizing. So in the words of one of my mentors..."Die quietly; nobody wants to hear you screaming."

But it's also about you learning to be comforted, by the Comforter and Him making you laugh on the days you feel like weeping; it's about you getting a brilliant relationship with the Holy Spirit. So right now we're just gonna have a time out because some of us up to date haven't been doing very well. You've been busy whining; busy bitching all over the place; letting everybody know how much you're suffering; going for the sympathy vote; going for ministry left, right and center; some of us have had more demons cast out of us than there are people in this room. We've looked for every short cut we can find, we've gone for everything; we've had hands laid on us by all kinds of people. But God has His hand on you and you're going through this because He sees something in you that he thinks is glorious and He has chosen you for this season of suffering and denial, because He has something powerful and majestic to give you, but you have to give Him what he wants, and

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that's your heart, all of it; your obedience. Say yes to His Lordship.