

“Let’s Go Deeper!”

This book is dedicated to all those “crazy” Christians who deep inside know there’s more and refuse to be satisfied with a sip from the Fountain when they could be filled with rivers of Living Water.

It is also written in thankfulness to our heavenly Father who knows the deep longings of our hearts to be with Him in oneness even when we find ourselves fleeing from His presence. What incredible love that He would not stop pursuing us but ever work to bring us into the glorious reality of our union with His Son!

A Poem For Jonah

A lad called to be a son,
for the Father had set His heart on him to become one.

For Jonah, a wearisome and loathsome hail
that followed him into even the sea’s high gale.

“I don’t want the footman or the horsemen too,
I don’t want to be that near to You.

Your presence pursues with depths that fear me,
I’ll lose my life if I let You that near me.

A life without crisis, without pain without cost,
I’ll live for you, but not with such loss.”

But son, loss is gain, for Ninevah calls,
And I need to send my prepared vessel before she falls.

You will see that Israel’s rising and falling was set
in a wee child who had not met Calvary yet.

But who will go to Ninevah for Us,
In whom is this Lamb revealed enough?

Can you flee a calling so high?
For My ways in the sea
answers the heaven’s sigh.
To bring forth sons in the image of the First Born,
To allow the Spirit of the Lamb to be formed.

My compassion is kindled by Ninevah’s cry
But Whom shall we send, Who will see with Our eyes?

To pour out mercy and give Life freely
The mind of the Lamb alone will be willing

Lord, it's not fair, my pain for their pleasure.
Their gift from what pressed me beyond my measure?
Are You cruel and unfair, is the joke on me?
Or was there a greater purpose in the depths of the sea?

Dear Jonah my dealings extended way beyond you
They were deeper than the sea and far beyond the skies blue.
I have called you into fellowship with the Son,
In His death and burial and resurrection.

Mystery of mysteries that heaven's praise
Is a little lamb sitting as though He was slain.
His death is our life, His loss is our gain.
He fled not the Cross, but endured the shame.

Had he not embraced His time outside the camp,
Had he rejected the depths and fled from the pressure,
Then how could we ever have received from His measure?

Because God loves Ninevah, he deals with you
A choosing that in oneness He might pour through you
To reach the multitudes that need life,
the dying of the Lord Jesus is borne through his wife.

Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp,
Let us embrace the depths and bear their stamp.
A Lamb within, still given for others...
A continuing city causes Ninevah to recover.

But you don't understand and you're angry with God?
It's not fair, and the path is too hard?
Have you seen the Lamb, have you known His heart?
Fill your eyes with His face and find a new start.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful Face
And the things on earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.”

Introduction

There is a cry from deep within the heart of the Church to know the Lord in greater measure. This hunger is not for more knowledge, ministry, or gifts. It is the yearning of longing hearts that desire to enter into a knowing of Christ in His depths. There is a knowing of our union into Christ that passes knowledge so that “we might be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). Some may have come to a place where they have

acquired quite a bit of knowledge concerning Christ and His Cross, and yet feel there is more. The hungry heart may begin to question if it is possible to fly high in the knowledge of the Lord and still be found as shallow concerning His depths.

True depth comes from someone who bears from deep within the Spirit of the thing and not just the knowledge of the thing. It may be possible for me to know and describe great and deep realities of the Cross, and yet be found shallow of His Cross nature in the essence of my being. My heart cries out to God that I would not minimize the things of His Spirit, but allow God to take me into His true depths by revealing that Christ is now my life. At times I have become satisfied to remain in stagnate waters on shallow shores, but I have found God faithful even then to work all things together to draw me back into His purpose of conformity to the image of His Son. His tender mercies never fail as He seeks to establish His Seed in us. During times when I have found myself fleeing from His presence, even then His Spirit has continued to declare and draw me to know the union that is my true identity in Christ. By the grace of God and through Christ's resurrection we have been raised as the vessel that is His Body, and by the grace of God will we seek to fulfill our purpose to pour out His life-giving waters.

In John Chapter one Jesus is called the Word of God. Jesus as the Word Himself came out from the very bosom of the Father, and this speaks of depth. The Word of God was sent from His place deep in the bosom of the Father, and not from the height of a mental concept or an eternal design in God's mind. The Son's relationship with the Father was in oneness of being and not agreement of doctrine, for even His doctrine was not His own (Jn 7:16). God's Son was sent forth as the very expression and exact likeness of the Father Himself (Jn. 14:7, Heb. 1:3). He expressed the Father through bearing His image from deep within.

There is a raising up that comes from knowing Christ in the power of His resurrection, and there is a puffing up that comes from knowledge concerning Him. Christianity is not an information culture but a people who have been joined to Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. The height of being called and sent of God to serve, or of receiving an anointing of from "on high" does not validate or represent true depth. Because Christ is Life and not doctrine or duty, what has been heard from heaven must be wrought deep in the earth of our hearts before it will bring forth any fruit. The Word must become flesh in us.

The Holy Spirit is so faithful to share with us wonderful realities from heavenly places in Christ, but He also desires to brood over the unformed expanses of earth in our hearts so that "heaven" (Christ) can dwell there. In this way, as it is in heavenly places will also be formed in us as earthen vessels.

In His Depth And Height

"May be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height..." (Eph.3:18).

Depth and height work together to manifest more fully the reality of Christ as Life. The heights of Christ in resurrection came from the depths of His death. Far beneath the surface of every splendid and fruitful tree is a root system that has pushed itself very deep into the soil. Before a corn of wheat can bring forth fruit it must fall into the ground and die. These examples can help us to see how it is necessary to know Christ in both His depth and His height. Paul prayed for the Church in Ephesus asking God that “all saints would know Christ in His breadth and length, in His depth and height” (3:18).

A Cry From The Deep

“Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord” (Ps. 130:1).

God leads us through the process of being conformed to the image of Christ. In the place of deep waters He desires to tenderly guide us through into the revelation of His Son. Psalm 77:19 says, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path is in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known”. God’s way in the sea is not to overwhelm us, but rather to bring us into the reality that our old life is dead and buried with Christ (Rom. 6). As the waters compass us and the depths close in, our salvation is found in embracing that we have been joined to Christ in His resurrection (Jonah 2). We will then lift our eyes from the storm and know ourselves in the realm of His fullness.

In these great waters our old concepts can become broken up so that a new foundation can be laid, which is the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. (I Cor. 3:11) At times this process may be so covered over with circumstantial waves that it becomes hard to perceive the transformation being accomplished deep in our hearts. Yet in the pressures of these “great waves” we will more clearly see that it is the Resurrection Himself that lifts us out from our own deadness. Although this work may not be joyous during its season, the end is greater fruitfulness. A deep well can produce much water, and a vessel that has been emptied of itself and filled with the life of Another has much treasure for others. Therefore, we should not fear circumstances that will press us beyond our measure, but rather trust in the God Who raises the dead. It is when we are in situations that are above our own strength that we learn not to trust in ourselves but to truly know Christ in the power of His resurrection. *“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life; But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God, Who raises the dead, Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us” (II Cor. 1:8-10),*

The Need for Depth

Where do we live? Can we be tossed to and fro with every wind the blows over the surface of the water? Is what we once felt to be of great depth able to be blown down with the power of a storm? If you go deep enough these surface disturbances will not cause your entire house to fall down, but instead you will find yourself being rooted into the deep and unchangeable realities of God’s Person. “Tossed to and fro” comes from being found in yourself rather than lost in Him.

There are so many movements that occur upon the surface of the waters. So many things to get caught up in, waves to ride with exciting ups and sudden let-downs. But deeper down beneath the surface it becomes still and quiet. Movements that occur in these waters are vast and stir from a place far more near the heart of the Lord than the surfaces' trembling.

If it is our desire to know Christ in a deeper way then we must cast ourselves into the Word of God so completely that it will cause us to immerse from the washing changed (Rm. 12:2). As we do, our relationship with God in the scriptures will move from adoration to saturation. If we choose to stay on the surface then much of our old ways will remain untouched by the Cross and still be seen floating around with all the outward activity. As we realize our need to press into Jesus in a greater measure we will find ourselves running to Him even when it requires setting a course for deep waters.

Will You Launch Out?

“Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught” (Luke 5:4).

God's depths are crying out to our depths for a relationship in Him that is far beyond what we have yet known. Deep is crying unto deep for a fellowship that goes beyond knowledge and produces His image through union. Who will be so moved by this cry from God's heart as to wrench themselves out of their present status to be cast into the vast ocean of God Himself where He can form in us the spirit of His Son? Beyond becoming “deeply stirred” by sensing God's desire, greater than inspiration and dedication, the requirement for His goal is utter abandonment into unknown waters. There comes an absolute determination to step out of what we know and into “a vessel” that will carry us further than we have ever gone before (Lk. 5:4). There are those who are willing to “throw themselves in” to the Word of God, receive the edification that the Body of Christ brings, and do whatever it takes to come to know Jesus in the greatest way possible. They will set their course to diligently seek God no matter what the cost, and push aside all that would hinder them in this path and cause them to drift. Their passion to know Him will cause them to press past their fears of drowning in order to get to Jesus.

Many find satisfaction, safety, and comfort by remaining in the waters they already possess. But the cause for which we stand is not our own, but the mandates of the heart of the Father. The cry is not to challenge our spiritual pride, seeking who can become “the deepest”. The motivation behind His cry is for the greater manifestation of Christ in his Body, and this means the increase of Jesus and the decrease of us. The motivation behind our response is love as we abandon ourselves to satisfy His heart-cry.

Let's Go Deeper!

Jesus said to Peter from His place in the deep, “leave the boat, move into my realm and come to me.” Peter did not yet fully have faith for the depths, but his passionate heart is the stuff that voyagers are made of. He was willing to step into depths unknown in order to get to Jesus. Peter desired to relate to Jesus on a level deeper than surface issues.

There is stability, familiarity, and comfort found in remaining at the same level on the “dry ground” of our own lives. To abandon ourselves to know Christ in His depths can bring on all kinds of trouble and irritation, yet great pearls are formed in such places. Much of what was learned in the “heights” of mountain top fellowship with the Lord becomes life in us as Christ is given place to possess our deep and inward part. As this happens the sweet aroma of Christ will begin to fill the dark valley places as we bear the fragrance of the knowledge that we have always loved. Deep under the dark soil, what once was a seed springs forth into a plant. Jesus said on His way to the cross that a seed had to FALL INTO the ground and allow death to work before it was able to become fruitful.

God told Ezekiel that His Word would be sweet in his mouth yet bitter in his belly (Ez. 3:3). Digesting what we eat is part of the process required for the food to bring nourishment and growth. If we eat a whole bunch of food and do not digest any of it, then what good is it doing? A surface drink of the Word is refreshing, but to allow the depth of the Word to be worked in us we must go through this process of God conforming us to the image of His Son (Rom.8:28-29). It can be enjoyable to embrace the teachings of “deeper life”, but have we yet fully abandoned ourselves into His depths? Jonah was faced with this dilemma, and found himself fleeing from the very presence of God.

JONAH

The Depths are Calling

“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”

Jonah wasn’t fleeing from Ninevah, he was fleeing from the presence of God. *“But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (1:3a).”* Jonah was running from the cost of going deeper in the Lord, but God continued to call him into a greater fellowship in His Son.

God called Jonah to “Arise and go to Ninevah”, but instead Jonah fled from God’s presence and began a continuous descent downward. First he went down to Joppa (1:3) and then he went down into a ship bound in the opposite direction of Ninevah (1:3). When a great storm came at sea, Jonah went down into the innermost part of the ship (1:5). A little while later Jonah is cast out of the ship and down into the raging sea (1:15). In the sea a great fish swallows and takes him down to a place that Jonah described as “the belly of hell” where the depth closed in round about him (2:2,5). And in this place Jonah said that he went down to the bottoms of the mountains (2:6).

Although Jonah was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, the scriptures also declare that God had cast him into the deep, in the midst of the seas (2:3). It was in these great waters that Jonah would come to know the very presence of God that He was fleeing from. It would down there at the very bottom that Jonah would have a new foundation laid.

It will cost us our lives to know the presence of God in a greater depth than just surface experience. The cost can cause all of us to flee at times, and yet the mercy of God continually calls us back to Himself into greater fellowship. His heart longs and stirs for us to launch out into greater depths of union. To leave the dry land of our life to jump into the unknown depths of His Life requires a love and trust in God's ability to bring us forth from these deep waters more conformed to the image of His Son.

God desired to form His Son in Jonah. God needed to prepare a vessel that He could send to the Ninevites. The issue in God's heart was care for others and an increase of His Son, yet the focus in Jonah's heart was his own personal issues and the cost that was being required. God was calling Jonah as a vessel that would bear His Lamb to others. Many receive the call, but few choose the narrow path of allowing the Lamb to be expressed as life. Jonah was fleeing from this upward call on a ship bound for Tarshish, but God's mercy sent forth a great wind into the sea. As the breeze began to blow Jonah eventually awakened to hear the Spirit's call.

It could be easy to assume that we would not be like Jonah and flee from the presence of God, but maybe we should look closer at that thought. Jonah was not fleeing from the presence of God in a praise and worship service, neither was he trying to avoid the presence of the Lord Who heals and blesses us. Jonah was trying to avoid knowing the Lord in a way that would cost him his life. This kind of knowing can only come from allowing the work of the Cross to become effectual inwardly.

Wake up and Jump In!

"So the shipmaster came to him and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not" (Jonah 1:6). "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm for you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you" (Jonah 1:12).

The crying out of the sea may have represented the stirring of God's heart to bring Jonah into a greater depth of fellowship in His Son's death, burial and resurrection. Deep was crying unto deep as God's depths began crying unto Jonah's depths. The sea was raging and would not be calmed. The men on the ship tried to satisfy the sea's demands with sacrifices and prayers to their gods as well as casting out their possessions. During all of this Jonah was sleeping in the bottom of the boat. Finally the captain of the ship had to wake him up and command him to pray for help. Even this heathen captain realized that it was time for Jonah to awake from his slumber and realize there are greater issues at stake than his own life and comfort. Finally they cast lots to find out who was responsible for this phenomenon, and the lot fell on Jonah.

Jonah then explained to his fellow travelers that he was a Hebrew that feared the God Who created the sea and the dry land, but that he was also fleeing from His presence. The men asked him what they should do to him to calm the sea, and Jonah told them to throw him into it. The men did not want to do this so they tried to bring the ship to land,

but could not because the sea was too tempestuous. Finally they cried to God to forgive them for releasing Jonah unto the sea, but they knew this was what the Lord was requiring.

As modern day disciples in the midst of our own storms, we may find ourselves willing to let go of everything but our own life. Yet it will soon become evident that to go the way of the Cross is not the denial of things, but the denial of self. We may try to “empty the boat” of everything in it, but God wants us to empty the boat of ourselves. The Lord is not wanting unchanged disciples with no possession sitting in a boat, but those who have left their old lives and come to know Him in the power of His resurrection. Jonah did not try to empty the boat of things but went deeper down into it. Again the method is not for us to “get lower”, whether that be through reactions such as depression or humility, but for us to know that we are dead and Christ is our life. Going deeper is just dead weight unless it puts away the old and allows New Life to come forth.

Really Calming The Sea

God did not want to calm Jonah’s circumstance but rather He stirred the waters up so much that Jonah had to be thrown into them before they would calm and be satisfied. **God was demanding a forming in the depths rather than a calming on the surface.** Can we not see God’s passionate pursuit for those He loves and desire to be with Him in oneness?

Jonah’s release from the boat into the sea wasn’t primarily to stop the crisis on the ship, nor was it punishment for Jonah’s rebellion to God’s call. In reality it was Jonah’s first step into a deeper relationship in the Lord. Everyone on the ship was spared because Jonah went down into the deep. It was his first step out of the boat and into the depths. In these waters he would experience the mighty work of the Cross. God’s faithfulness to bring this son into maturity is evident.

Those around us need a depth of Christ’s life that we may not possess yet. We cannot minister to others what has not yet been worked in us by Life. We each must decide how we will respond to God’s cries from the deep. The Lord knows where this process will eventually lead, for the Lord sees the great need for vessels that bear the Life of Christ. Yet, to Jonah, at this point it all may have yet seemed like a swirling, confusing catastrophe that was carrying him down into deeper darkness than he had ever known.

To be continued in “Let’s Go Deeper Part II”.

