

A Mirror Covered with Water – Part 2

By Paris Reidhead*

On August 12, I asked you to turn to Exodus, Chapter 40, and tonight I am asking you to do the same thing. We saw in perspective what I would rather think the Lord would have us see tonight in detail. This 40th Chapter is the assembly of the Tabernacle. I presented it to you as the pattern of the Christian life, and trusted that by means of it you would be able to locate how far you have grown, how far you have gone in God's intended purpose.

How we saw that the four hangings on the gate, the five pillars and the four hangings, spoke to us of the character of our Lord Jesus who said, "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." (John 10:9) There was the hanging of blue, the blue curtain speaking to us of the celestial, Heavenly dweller, the One by whom all things were made, the Creator, and the Sustainer of the universe. There was the white linen with the embroidery work of the fine twine linen it was called which spoke to us of our Lord in His purity: God who became flesh, living a sinless life. There was the hanging of scarlet which spoke to us of our Lord in His sacrifice. The hanging of purple which spoke to us of our Lord, enthroned, reigning, ruling, with all authority in Heaven and earth in His hands. This is the door. He said, "By Me, if any man enter in..." "Unto as many as received Him..." (John 1:12) And this is the One we present to sinners. This is the One whom they receive. The One who made the universe, the One who lived a sinless life, who died an atoning death, and was gloriously and triumphantly raised from the dead. This is Christ whom we preach. He is all of this and more, and one has to receive Him. You couldn't take one panel down and tuck it under your arm and say, I am going in here, going in there. It's not Christ, the four doors; it is Christ the door. And He is a Person, and we have to accept all of these aspects of His character and work.

Then we saw the altar of burnt offering, speaking to us of the Cross. To those who receive His Person, they benefit from the work of His Cross. He died that we might live. There God's justice and His mercy met, and our Lord Jesus died, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to Him. We saw this at the altar of burnt offering.

Then there was a Tabernacle. There was a building. It had two rooms, 15 by 15, the innermost room; and the outermost room, 15 by 30. The innermost room, the holiest of all, had the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat with the outstretched wings of the cherubim. Once a year the High Priest would go in, not without blood, and make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people. This spoke to us of that place of personal, intimate, glorious, revelation of God to our hearts. In the holy place there was the table of shew bread, the sufficiency of Christ, the altar of incense for the place of prayer, the many spices and ointments in the incense speaking to us of the different kinds of prayer, the prayer of confession, the prayer of thanksgiving, the prayer of praise, the prayer of petition, all of this seen in the incense on the altar. And then there was the candlestick, the symbol of the Holy Spirit who alone can lead us in our prayer and can illumine the Word to our heart's need.

Now I have omitted one article of furniture, and it is that to which I would bring you tonight. Between the altar of burnt offering and this holy place and the holiest of all was a brass basin, lined with mirrors, filled with water. Now we do not know the dimensions of this. Without dimensions because apparently God wanted us to know there was no limit to His grace and His mercy. And so He did not prescribe the diameter and the width and the height. We just assume that it was a considerably, large basin. I would estimate that it was probably ten to twelve feet in diameter; perhaps not, but it could well have been. Lined with mirrors. Silver had been placed and polished and placed on the bottom, filled with water, with spigots on the side, faucets on the side from which the water could be drawn.

Now, dear friends, if all God wanted you to have in your Christian life was forgiveness and pardon, all that would need to have been in the Tabernacle, in the court, would have been the altar of burnt offering. If all that there was to have been your provision was forgiveness, justification, relief from the burden and pressure of past sins, there would not have to have been anything else. But you see, God's purpose wasn't just to keep you out of hell. You have heard me say that, but to bring you into vital, living, transcendent glorious union with Him here and now. And so there had to be preparation. And the preparation for going on into this which is God's goal for you, the holiest of all. Since the veil has been rent, you have your High Priest there. He has said that "He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the Heavenlies in Christ." (Eph. 1:3) And the place to which He

is leading and taking you is the Heavens. This is where He wants you to come, into this third Heaven of fellowship with Him. This is His desire. This is His goal. And so, you have to ask yourself, How far have you come? Have you received Him who is presented by the gate? I trust you have. Have you come to the altar of burnt offering? Well and good. Fine. But did you stop there? Did you stop at the place of forgiveness and pardon? Have you gone on to the Word of God as it is pictured by the table of shewbread, to feed upon that Word alone?

You know the little turtledoves are fed by their mothers. They eat the food, chew it, digest it in whatever manner the Lord has provided for turtle doves, and then when they come home, the little doves sit at the edge of the nest and open their beaks, and the mothers will give them this predigested food. And this is how they are fed. It is a good way for turtle doves. But how long has it been since you have been able to go to the Word of God and feed yourself on the living Bread. How long has it been since you have been able to take this Book and find the Spirit of God speaking to your heart out of the Book? Do you have to have these commentaries, these notes, these books? Has the Word become illumined by the Spirit of God to your heart? Do you feed on it? Do you have something to give people in the day that you meet, because God gave you something?

What about prayer? Do you really have a life of prayer, or do you pray out of a sense of duty? Have you come into the holy place? Have you gone that far? Have you gone into the place of intimate union and fellowship with God as spoken of by the holiest of all, which is His goal for us? We sang, My goal is God. My goal is God. My goal is intimate fellowship with Him.

Dr. Tozer¹ speaks of a book, "The Cloud of Unknowing." I believe the author is unknown. But whoever it was, a devout heart indeed. He said, "There comes a time when you have passed the point of words and thoughts and ideas, but in the presence of God you have just entered into the cloud of unknowing. You have just come to the place where worship flows, because you see Him and know Him." This is where He wants to bring all of us. Perhaps you have known in some time past this, but He wants us to dwell there. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High." (Psa. 91:1) Where is the secret place? Here. "He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the Heavens in Christ."

I remember years ago hearing a preacher say, Well, you see, what we are trying to do is get the job done. Well, what was in his mind? Well, the job done was to get people converted. A pity that Paul didn't understand that. I'm should we wouldn't rob Paul of having had a great burden for the unsaved. But Paul didn't say that getting the job done was to get them converted. That was to leave them back there at the altar of burnt offering. Oh no. He says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. 1:27,28) He wanted to take them on, on into the holy place, but on into the very holiest of all. There is the place where spiritual blessings abound.

Oh, you can get soulish blessings out here. You can get the blessings of your intellect and of your mind, and of your emotions out in the outer court, but the spiritual blessings are in the Heavens. And the Heavens are the 3rd Heaven, as we would see it here, the holiest of all, a place of personal, intimate, fellowship and union with Him. Now, if you have been born of God, you want to go all the way. You are not prepared to stop. You are not prepared to settle down.

You know I think there is something radically wrong with a person if they are content to sit down out there by the altar of burnt offering and see the pile of stones covered with the frame and the cornice to which the horns — to which the offering was tied. A lot of soot out there, a lot of ashes out there, a lot of dirt blowing around out there, odors of burning flesh. Can you imagine? Someone that says, Oh well, that is all I am interested in really. Just so I know my sins are forgiven, just so I know that I am pardoned. And so they sit there year after year, after year; and they see this fire consume the sacrifice and the smoke ascend, and they know that their sins are forgiven. But you see, Wouldn't this betoken the fact that they are only interested in what they want in Christ? Rather than interested in what He wants in them? He put the altar of burnt offering there. But He put something else.

¹ Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) Pastor and Author. Christian and Missionary Alliance

My, the glory of the holy place. Here are the boards made of acacia wood, fitted together, little pieces. Have you ever read the dimensions of these boards? Now I'll tell you a secret. There wasn't an acacia tree in the whole land where it grows from which you could have cut one board. I saw this past week a board about 24 inches wide cut out of an enormous tree. It was a lovely board. But I'll just wager that you could hunt all over the area where the acacia tree grows and could not find a board 12 inches wide and 12 feet long. It just didn't grow. Acacia is a little gnarled, twisted tree. You know how they made those boards? They would just take a piece out here and cut it and fit it into a piece over here, fit them smoothly and nicely together. Then he would take a piece here and fit it in there. And that board was made out of small pieces that were fitted together. And it speaks of the habitation of God through the Spirit for it was wood covered with gold. It speaks of that wonderful thing to my heart, the church. And so it is that there was to have been a place for you in His Body, the Church, and there He gathered together you and me, and others of us, and He just fitted us together in such a way that you could be covered with gold and it could become a board in the Tabernacle. It speaks of the church, and these blessings that we have are there found in the church's body. And everything that you receive you're going to receive because He has called out a people to Himself. They won't be apart from the Church. They are in the Church. But you see there has to be in addition to the church, there has to be the light of the Holy Spirit, and then there has to be personal application. Wonderful things are there for you, great spiritual blessings. What stands in the way? Well you see, between the altar and the holy place was the laver. What was the purpose? It was to prepare people to go on with God. This is what it was. It was put there so that people that had been pardoned and people that had been forgiven would have the hindrances taken away so that they could go on with God.

It was symbolized by the Lord Jesus that night on which He was betrayed, "after the Supper, girding Himself with a towel, taking a basin and a pitcher of water and sitting down at His disciples feet, and washing them, pouring the water on their feet, wiping them, and then going on to the next. And Peter, seeing Him, said, Lord, you cannot do that to me. Then He said, You have no part in Me. If you do not want Me to wash your feet, then it means you have no part in Me." (John 13:4-8) And, my friend, if you are not willing to come to the laver, then it means you have no part in Christ. If you just say, Well I want a hell insurance policy, but I do not want to be clean, (He said, You have no part in Me,) you haven't either. If you have been born of God, then you want to be clean, and you want Him to wash your feet. "Then Peter said, Wash me all over, Lord. He said, No, you do not need that. You just need your feet clean, because you have already been washed. If you have not been washed all over you have no part in Me." (John 13:9,10) So it comes between the altar of burnt offering and the door of the Tabernacle. And it is only for people that have been pardoned and forgiven.

You know, someone has said, and you frequently hear it, Well all the good people are in church. Well nothing could be further from the facts. It is the good people that are outside. It is the bad people that are in church. It is the people that were so horribly ruined by sin that they knew that they couldn't do anything to help themselves and were prepared to come and cast themselves at the feet of the Lord Jesus and ask Him to pardon them and forgive them, and make them whole. These are the people that are in church.

Well now, because you have been forgiven and pardoned, did that change you? No. It didn't change you at all. You were forgiven of your past sins, but what about you, what about the future? Here at the altar of burnt offering, all of that great accumulation of guilt that is yours from the years past, you carried to this place and the Lord Jesus died, and the past was put away, and He said He would remember your sins against you no more forever. And so, In His eyes you stood there justified. But what about the next day when you failed the Lord, when you got angry or you resorted to some habit of the past and lied to escape from the consequences or disobeyed the Lord some way. That's sin. You were walking, and so you got dirty. Now what are you going to do about it? Oh well, my sins are forgiven, that is all there is to it. No, you see, God put the laver there...Between the cross and the place of fellowship.

Every day the priest had to come to the laver, stand over it, lean over it, and look into it. The mirror on the bottom would show him what he could not otherwise see. He could see his hands, but you see there are some things that you know that you do wrong. Oh, when you do something that you know is wrong, there is no question about it. You can see it. You reach over to the stove, and you take your hand away and there is a big black smudge on it. You know it is wrong. You do not need anything further. There it is. You are dirty. Your feet get in the dust, and you look at them, and they are dirty.

But you see, all that we do to grieve Him whose Name is holy is not quite as obvious as this. And so God has had to give us a mirror whereby we can see more deeply than we would otherwise be able to see, to see areas of our heart and life that we couldn't see. So here is this laver that is lined with mirrors, so that we can see that which would not otherwise be observable by us, and we can deal with it.

Now everyone knows that when they lose their temper, when they become cruel or brutal, or selfish, or proud, or arrogant, or lustful, or whatever it is, it is sin. It is all over their hands, all over their feet. It is perfectly obvious. There was provision made for that. But there are some other things that just aren't that obvious. One are the things that you have to see at the laver is your motives, and this is where you have to come. We do not know our own hearts. God knows we do not know our own hearts, and so God wants to show them to us.

I hear people often say, You know, the reason why he did that, and then they proceed to say something that only God is qualified to say. If you are ever tempted to tell why somebody did something, I hope you will stop in time, because you know to say that you know why someone did something is to say that God and I are on the same level, on the same plain. The only thing you can possibly say is what was done. Please, please for your sake, do not make such a presumptive claim to Deity as to say, I know why he did that. You see you have to stand out the human heart. You do not know why anybody does what they do. You may know what they did, but you don't know why they did it. And for you to say that you know why they did it is just going far beyond any proper limits, because the fact of the matter is that very often the person does not know why he did it. He does not realize why he did it. He just did it, that is all. He hasn't analyzed his emotions. He hasn't analyzed his motives. He may have been something that he completely forgot. Wrong, sin, may have been something that just — well it didn't seem — he did not intend it the way it was meant. Maybe it was something that seemed innocent enough, but deep down in his heart there was a great malignancy of feeling. So, since it is so hard, impossible, for us to know why anybody else does something and difficult for us to know our own hearts, it is necessary for us to have an X-ray machine whereby we can see what we could not otherwise see, and this is the laver. For you see, it is not only a mirror, but it is a mirror covered with water, and the water speaks to us of the Holy Spirit; and the mirror speaks to us of the Word. And it is the Spirit of God using the Word of God to try our motives.

Now David was utterly sincere and so when he went to bed one night he said, "O Lord, try my reins in the night seasons." (Psa. 16:7) Have you dared to pray that way? You know what reins are? Especially you that have had the good fortune of living where horses were. It is awfully hard to find them these days. They seem to have disappeared, except under a saddle or something, but the days when people had to work horses as I did as a boy back in Minnesota. Go out before the sun was up in the morning, in the darkness of the barn, reach up for the familiar harness, and put it on, fasten it, with your eyes shut, then lead the horses out, stand them together, buckle the reins together and get them crossed and pull this way, and they'd turn that, then have to go, get off and fix them. Oh, the reins were terribly important, because by that little ribbon of leather, you controlled this large horse. You sat back on the seat of the implement, these ribbons of leather were between your hands, and you would pull this way and the strap would carry the message up, and the horses bit would turn its head a little, and he would walk the way you had turned his head.

And so it is that God said through David that way deep down in your heart you have things that steer you, and govern you, and direct you, and it is very difficult to analyze it. And so He said, You have to, you absolutely must have your motives tested by God.

Now let me ask you a question. You say, O God, I want you to fill me. I am going to bring my empty earthen vessels, clean through Jesus' Blood, and I want you to fill me with Your Spirit. And the question you have to ask yourself is this: Now why, why do I want to be filled with the Spirit? Why do I want God's anointing? God's presence? God's power? Well, perhaps you might say, So that I can be an effective Christian, or I can be a successful servant. Many motives. But you know there is only one real proper motive, and that is that Jesus Christ should be glorified through your life. And so, as we come to the laver and as we lean over it, and we read the Word, and we study the Word, and we ask the Spirit of God to illumine the Word of God to our hearts, He is going to show us our motives. And He is going to deal with them until our whole life is brought to focus, and all of the energies and activities and plans, like the rays of the sun, are bent to a point, and the one point in the Christian life

that God will recognize and honor is that of glorifying Jesus Christ. By your recreation, and so this is bent. By your plans for your home, and this is bent. By your business, and this is bent. And each of these rays have to be bent, until they come to this one point of focus. You see everything that God is doing today, He is doing to answer the prayer of the Lord Jesus, who said, "Glorify Thou Me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5) And so, if you want prayer answered, and you want your life enriched and blessed, there has to be a unifying of your life to this one point. Now it is quite possible to say, Lord, do this. But there is a straight line. The reason for wanting it is because you want it. Your motives thus have to be tested. And if you will come to the Word of God, and ask the Spirit of God to teach you, He will teach you. And He will disclose the motives of our heart. They can only be shown there.

Then there is something else we need to see. We need to see ourselves, the kind of people we are. It is very easy for us to understand that to lie is wrong. You can get dirty. To steal is wrong. Get dirty. But you know many a person can say, Oh look, I am dirty, because I as a Christian have lied. And so in brokenness they come and say, Lord, I lied. Forgive me for lying. And He does. But you know, God's purpose is not just to forgive us for what we have done. It is to save us from what we are. And so it is as we come to the Word of God and lean over the Word of God that God shows us the kind of people we are. We can see with our own eyes what we have done. When you touch something that is dirty you get dirty from it. When you do something that is wrong you know that it is wrong. But God's purpose isn't just to show us repeatedly what we have done that is wrong, what we have said that is wrong. The laver was that place where God could show us ourselves, and we would lean over this, and look at it; and because there was water covering the mirrors, and the water speaks of the Spirit of God, the mirror speaks of the Word, it was the work of the Spirit of God through the Word to show us ourselves. Have you seen yourself?

Now before you are going to go into the Holy Place, you have got to see yourself. This is indispensable. You have got to see yourself. We have been speaking to you for the last several weeks about brokenness. But you know it is quite easy for one to become broken over the fact that their mind has been unclean and they have used it in thinking lustful thoughts, or that their words have been unclean or unkind, or they have done something else, and come and say, Lord, forgive me for this, and forgive me for that, and we can't escape it; we have got to do that. We have got to do that. We've got to do that. And if tonight you know that there is unconfessed, unforgiven sin in your life, I assure you of this, that it is a road block in your life. And if you don't deal with it you are never going to go beyond it, just as a— just a dead end street. I have known people that have been 30, 40, 50 years under good sound teaching, and yet in intimate conversation with them you discover they have made absolutely no progress at all. Well why? Well you go back and find that 40 years ago somebody hurt them, and they have been cherishing and nourishing this wound and injury for all these many years. It wasn't the thing that happened to them that was so bad. It wasn't that someone hurt them in what they did. It is what they did to themselves. What happens to you does not hurt you. It's what you do about it. And so they have nourished this hurt, and they have cherished this slight, and they have fed this injury, and it has gone 20 years, and 30 years, and 40 years, and they are right back there where they were. They made no progress whatever, because they didn't deal with the thing that was there. And so it is quite necessary for me to say that all spiritual progress in your life is going to be determined by your keeping a broken heart. But you see, it is not enough just to see what we have done and deal with what we have done. God wants to go beyond that. He wants to show us what we are.

And so, as we come and lean over the laver, and look into the Word of God, for that is what it pictures, the Word of God begins to talk to us about us. It is rather ruthless. God doesn't spare us you know. He said, "Spare not Agag. Slay the cattle, and beasts and everything precious." And God has found no way that He can make peace with the flesh, yours or mine, or anyone else's. And so He doesn't spare us, and as we come to the Word He begins to show us. And that is a terrible thing, most distressing, because pretty soon you feel almost depressed. Oh, look at this. Look at what the Bible says about me. However will I get out of it? And sometimes people fail to recognize, however, the difference between the work of the Spirit of God and the depressing work of Satan. You know how to tell the difference, I am sure.

Well I will explain it to you. Satan's purpose is to discourage you, dishearten you, and destroy you. And so, his arguments always go something like this: You never do what's right. You always are wrong. You never. You always. And almost invariably these are the two strings on his harp. He just plucks one never, and always. Never do what you ought to do, always do what you shouldn't do. Plunk, plunk, plunk, plunk. That is all he has, two notes. You never, and you always. Now the Lord never does that. He always does something else. You see, He is not trying to discourage you. He simply pulls your heart aside and says, You

see, that is what it is. And you look at it, and you draw back in horror, and you say, That's my heart? Why the seed of every man's sin is there. There is nothing that anybody has ever done that I couldn't do. Why I thought I was a religious person. I thought I was a devout person. I thought I was an earnest, sincere, Christian person, and now to look at me, see what I see. Yes, that is what it is. And then He turns around and says, You know, I knew this when I called you to Me. You are surprised, but I am not, and I loved you any way. And then He whispers to you, You see, I loved you when I knew the very worst about you. And you're surprised by what you see, but I am not. Now the enemy says, See, God couldn't love anybody like you. Look at you. You always disobey. You never... Oh not so our wonderful Lord. He just takes the knife of His Word and cuts down over the thin membrane of our casual sophistication, and He peels it back and says, Look at that heart. Do you see it? And you draw back in horror and you say, Look. Even though I am pardoned, even though I am forgiven, why there isn't anything anyone has ever done that I couldn't do. And He says, Yes, that is right. Well Lord, what am I going to do? And then He says, Look at the Cross. Look at the Cross. Well what do I see there. Well look at the back side of the Cross. There you see that not only did the Lord Jesus die for you, but He died as you. He became just what you see, so that you become just what He is. "He was made to be sin for you, He who knew no sin, and you were made the righteousness of God in that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor. 5:21) So when you see yourself and you get this overwhelmingly horrible view of what you are, then He says, Look, this is what the Lord Jesus became. He not only died for you, but He died as you. Always when the Lord shows us something of ourselves, He shows us something of the Lord Jesus.

If you remember the old viewers that grandmother had, the stereopticon viewers. You would go on Sunday afternoon and she would take these. They never added. Where I was they never put a new card in there. The same ones, in the same order, and I knew what they were. And every Sunday afternoon that we would go, I'd have to sit down and sit there, and hold this wooden thing with the glass you know, and put it in, and look at it, and you would come away cross-eyed from having stared for all afternoon while the elders talked, at these scenes. You were sure nothing was like that, but it was something to do anyway.

When the Lord Jesus takes the stereopticon of the Word of God and through this eye piece He shows you you, through this eye piece He shows you Christ. He never leaves you depressed. He always wants you to understand that you have to see yourself in order to see His Son. And you only appreciate His Son to the degree that you have discovered your need. And so He shows you the laver. And you come and lean over the laver and here is reflected from the Word of God your heart, and with Paul you cry out, "In me and my flesh there is no good thing." (Rom. 7:18) "Why the things I counted gain to me, I count loss to Christ, and count all things but refuse." (Phil. 3:7,8) Yes, that is right. And you have to come to that place. And that is where you see it, in the Word of God. But then the moment that you say that, I count all things but refuse, that I may win Christ, being made conformable unto His death, knowing Him, and the fellowship of His suffering, and the power of His resurrection.

One eye piece shows you you, and the other eye piece show you your Lord. God always does this. But now, you see if you don't come to the laver, then all you are going to be doing through the days of your years is simply coming and drawing from the basin of His grace the water to wash off what you said, Lord forgive me for losing my temper, Lord forgive me for having had unclean thoughts. And so you wash your hands today, but you never see your face. You never see yourself. You have to come to the laver in order to see beyond what you've done, beyond what you've said, into your heart. And then you discover that God has looked at you through the magnifying glass of His grace, and "He found no good thing in you," and it didn't discourage Him or dissuade Him at all. He set His love upon you, and He loved you when He knew the very worst about you, and He drew you to Himself, and then He became what you were so that you could become what He is. And so this is that you see at the laver.

Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful thing it is to see yourself the way God sees you, and how easy it becomes then to break before Him. Otherwise you see, you are going to strain at trying to be better, and you come to the place where you say, Well Lord, with the kind of a heart that I have, what can there be but this? Here you see, you washed your hands. You said, Lord, forgive me. I'll never lose my temper again. You set your jaw, clench your fist. Just forgive me this once, Lord, and I won't bother you any more. I promise you. But you did bother Him again, because all you saw was your hands. But when you come to the Word of God, and look into that, then He shows you you. Why you say, That's all you can expect, Lord. Failure. He says, That is right. All I can expect from you is failure; all I can expect from you is defeat. That is all there is in you. And if you are just going to depend upon you that is all I'll get. But when you come to the laver and you see yourself, you say, Well now, Lord,

where from here? And He says, Look back at the altar. And there you see that the One on the altar was not just there for you, but He was there as you. He didn't just put Christ there, He put you there. You were there, crucified with Christ. And if you are prepared to see what He sees, then you can approach the altar from the other side. When you came in the door, all you saw was what you had done. But after you have gone to the laver, you look back and see what you are, and then you say, Oh, how wonderful it is that I am crucified with Christ. He not only died for me, but He died as me. Oh, what a relief. I don't have to carry the body of this death any longer.

You know the emperors of China established a rule once that if a man murdered, the victim, the one who was murdered, would have to be tied on to the back of his murderer. So here it would be that he carried someone right on his back, laced around, body to body, arm to arm, hand to hand, and he would walk through, and it was by this means that he was punished, until he would fall down because of the very corruption of his crime. [Tape skips begins] And there are those you know that have carried the body of death, this is what Paul said, Who is going to cut these lines, who is going to cut these bands? "Who is going to take the body of this death off of me." (Rom. 7:24) I cannot carry it any longer. And we come to the laver, and we see that that body of death is not anything but you. It is just me. That is what we are. [Tape skips ends] What am I going to do about it, Lord? "Who is going to deliver me from this body of this death." Well then, some writer with his book will say, Sorry friend, that is what it is going to be from here on. Thank God, that is not what Paul said. Just as he cried out, "Oh, wretched man that I am; Who shall deliver me from the body of this death," he cried out, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ." (Rom. 1:8) Well how was he delivered from the body of this death? At the Cross. For the Lord Jesus not only went there for him, but He went there as Him.

And, dear heart, if you can realize that the day Jesus Christ died, you died, it's going to mean such relief to you. But you mean to say, If I once see that I never need to come back again. Oh no. Oh no. You have got to keep daily returning to the laver, and anything God shows you you instantly deal with. And my friend, if this can become the habit of your heart...

You say, Brother Reidhead, are you just saying now that there is nothing more in the Christian life than failure and cleansing, and failure and cleansing. No. I am not saying that at all. But I am saying that if you don't go to the laver you'll never go beyond the laver. If you do not come in brokenness to the place of cleansing you'll never go beyond the place of needing cleansing. But if you'll come to the laver, and see yourself, and deal with what you see, then there is the door of the Tabernacle, and blessing within. But if you don't come to the laver, you never can go into Tabernacle. If you don't see what you have done, if you do not see the motives [Tape skips begins] of your heart that are contrary to His glory, and if you do not see what you are, you cannot ever go into the holy place. The only ones that can go in are the ones that first come to the Cross and then they have come to the laver to see themselves. Then they can go in. Then they can go in. But not until.

My dear friend, many of you in past weeks have [Tape skips ends] felt the Spirit of God speaking to your heart in brokenness. You have broken before the Lord. You have testified to His forgiving grace, His pardoning love. And you know that I've said to you again and again, you have to stay here. But not in a final sense. The priest came daily to the laver, but that isn't as far as they went. They went from the laver into the holy place. You couldn't go into the holy place without going to the place of brokenness; but having gone to the place of brokenness, you could go into the place of refreshment, and deliverance, and grace, and strength.

Now I speak to you in these terms. If you're not willing to break before God, if you're not willing to deal with everything He shows you, if you're not willing to wash your hands and your feet and lean over the laver to see your heart, and deal with what God shows you, then you have set a roadblock in your Christian progress. If I see you ten years from now and you don't come to the place of brokenness and confession and dealing with what God shows you, I know that you are going to be ten years from now right where you are tonight. Oh, you may have filled notebooks full of truth and doctrine, you may have memorized the whole New Testament, you may have been catechized on Strong's Shorter - Theology and passed, but if you haven't come to the place of brokenness, spiritually you are going to be in right the same place ten years from now that you are tonight. But if you are prepared to break before God, bend before God, bow before Him, and then you're going to find Him taking you into the Tabernacle, into the holy place.

But what if you say, I go into the Word and He begins to feed me, and I go into that place of prayer, what if I sin then? The Priest went daily into the tabernacle, and every time they approached the tabernacle they came to the laver. And so there has got to be a daily brokenness. How far do you want to go with God? How far do you want to go with Him? Well if you've been born of God you want to go just as far as He wants you to. Do you know what it is going to cost? Constant brokenness, returning to the laver, again and again and again. Whenever an attitude, or action you do grieve Him, you have got to come back. That is why it is there. But you see, the further you go, and the longer you stay, the less you need the laver. Whenever you need it, that's the place you have to come.

Now let's look at it again. The destination wasn't the altar of burnt offering, the Cross. The destination is the Holy Place, filled with the fullness of God, in His presence. Have you gone there? Then you cannot pass the laver. You have got to stop there. Are you prepared to do it? If you are, there is cleansing. And cleansing isn't the end. It is just preparation to go on with God.

Let us bow in prayer. Now Father, we are here before Thee. We've talked about the fact that You understand us, and You know all about us, and You love us when You know the very worst about us. But there is nothing in us that shocks Thee, though we often, seeing our own hearts, are appalled by what we see, but Thou art not. For Thou didst know it, and love us when Thou didst know the worst about us. And Thou wast willing to become what we were that we might be made what Thou art. Now we are here a company of people on this Labor Day Weekend that are prepared to leave and go to our homes. Some, Lord, have looked into the mirror and seen what manner of person they are, and they are going to go away just the same. Now we love them, Lord, and we know Thou dost love them. But we know that if they do not deal with what they see, they are always going to be the same. It is going to be harder for them next time. It is just going to be more difficult, and that they are setting up a roadblock in their spiritual progress, and they will never get beyond it. They cannot go under it, they cannot get around it, and they cannot go over it. We must deal with what Thou dost show us on Thine own terms. If we will, Thou wilt meet us. Now show it to us tonight, Father. How can a speaker make men and women hunger for Thee? How can a preacher make people want to know Thee in the fullness of Thyself so that they are willing to take the low place and break, and bow, and bend? All we can do is tell them, Father, what Thy Word says, and then somehow by the Holy Spirit, Thou must put into their hearts such an insatiable hunger to be all Thou dost want them to be, and have all Thou dost want them to have, that they are going to be willing to meet Thee on Thy terms. Father, show them that as they bow, and bend, and break, and confess their sin, and deal with everything that is before them, that as they see themselves and their motives and take the low place as being cross worthy, that Thou art not doing this to destroy us, but to deliver us and set us free. We cannot ever be anything but the Lord Jesus can be everything in us and to us; but He can only be what we let Him be, and we are only going to let Him be what we see we need; and so, Father, wilt Thou show to everyone here the great wisdom, the great wisdom of breaking, of coming to the Cross, coming to the place of death, so that life can reign. Death is not an end. It is just a step to life. Brokenness is not an end. It is just a step to victory. Let it be so tonight.

Now just this word of invitation...[Tape finishes here]

Now, Father, we thank and praise Thee for Thy presence, for the working of Thy Spirit. We thank Thee that there are those who sensed their need, recognize their failure, and have said, If I had done as I ought to have done I would have gone. Lord, that Thou shalt give them no rest nor peace until they do what they ought to do. Show them that they can do it now, that it is up to them, that Thou hast given them inducement and encouragement and help, and might it be that even tonight they do what they ought to do. We pray for them that Thou wilt give them no rest, no real peace until they rest in complete meeting with Thee. Heavenly Father, dismiss us with Thy blessing, As the days of the week pass and we need, help us to go back to the laver. Keep us ever in broken spirit, Lord, Keep our spirits from ever calcifying. Keep us low before Thee. For Thou hast said, The broken and contrite spirit Thou shalt not despise. May grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be and abide with each of us now, and until Jesus comes again. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, September 2, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.