

Spiritual Dryness 1 of 2, Heaven Talk



January 15, 2015

Ezekiel: Good evening, welcome to Heaven Talk: considerations of Heaven, and Heavenly considerations. I'm Ezekiel.

Clare: ...and I'm Clare,

Ezekiel...and we just wanted to come and visit your screen tonight. The topic of discussion is dryness.

Clare: Spiritual dryness.

Ezekiel: Ring a bell?

Clare: It must ring a bell with someone because we had a heck of a time getting in here to record it.

Ezekiel: A few bumps and bruises along the way.

Clare: More than usual.

Ezekiel: So we just wanted to talk about the times when you just really feel like you're in a desert. You can't sense, or feel, or hear the Lord. It seems like you can't touch Him. Ever have that problem?

Clare: Like right now? I am going through one of those desert times right now, so it's especially poignant to me right now.

Ezekiel: I don't want to insult your intelligence, I am sure you know what that's like. Someone once said, early in my conversion:

"When you can't sense or feel or see or hear the Lord, maybe it's because your deep, deep, deep inside of Him. When you see and hear and sense something, you are looking at it from the outside, looking toward it. When you're in the center of God, deep in His heart (and many of the early Christian writers talk about that), that's really a time of profound growth in our soul, but our feelings are cut off and it's hard. Very hard."

Clare: I was reminded of, when you were saying that, of that famous little picture with the footprints: My child, I was carrying you. Only one set of footprints. Why did you desert me, Lord? How come there's not two sets of footprints? And the Lord answered him, Because I was carrying you. And in these dry times, He really does need to carry us.

Ezekiel: It reminds me of a baby going, "Waaaa".

Clare: That's for sure.

Ezekiel: I am sure you mothers can relate to this. If a baby isn't nursing properly, many times the mother will draw the baby AWAY from the breast, repeatedly, to the point to where he kinda gets the idea, and she still won't give him the milk until he's really screaming and going at it, until he really wants it with a real hunger and a passion.

Clare: Is that what you want, Lord, for me to scream?

Ezekiel: A good friend of mine told Him once, "Ya know, Lord, if you keep playing hard to get, you're not gonna get got". I don't know how that works...

Clare: That wouldn't work for me.

Ezekiel: We were kinda brainstorming, and looking at some examples and reasons to maybe troubleshoot some of this, and right off the bat, one of the very first things we came up with, was, remember we have a real enemy. And it's in a time of great trial that the devil tries to cloud our faith in our mind. But remember the Lord says, "I, the Lord, do not change. I am true to you. I will never leave you nor forsake you".

Clare: We know He's there by faith, and that brings up another point. A lot of times, when He's doing this, He's doing it to STRENGTHEN our faith. Sure, I would say, "What? Strengthen my faith?" Sure because we KNOW He's there, and we know that He loves us, and He's not allowing us to see Him for a season, and He wants to see, "Will they still believe? Will they still cleave to Me? Will they still continue to do all the things I've asked them to do? Will they be obedient during that time even though they aren't really seeing Me?"

Ezekiel: Ya know, another thing to remember is, this is temporary. Remember the times He's brought you through, in the past. David in the Psalms regularly complained, sometimes bitterly, about his trials and sufferings, but almost every time, he goes back. And you can see time and time again in the Psalms, but I remember Your faithfulness in the past.

Just recollecting and trying to separate yourself, for a minute, from your trial and the dryness, and think, "How did He bring me through the LAST time?" because this has probably happened before, right?

Clare: I counted up today, I have been walking with the Lord for 35 years, and I can't even begin to count the number of times He has brought me through a desert like this.

Ezekiel: James talks about in the 1st chapter, verse 2: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,

whenever you face trials of any kind because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you might be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Clare: Right, right. In the early, early church, some of the traditional writers and church fathers talk about the desert of dryness, and that it's a sign of (I was laughing about this because I was sharing it with someone today.) maturity to be able to function in the fullness of being a Christian when the Lord is not revealing Himself to you, when He's not making it plain that He's there with you, and you're not feeling Him; you can't sense Him, or touch Him or see Him or hear Him. There's just a distance there, like a dark wall.

And some of those writers say that the need for all these affirmations - to be able to see the Lord, to hear the Lord - is really for IMMATURE Christians, not for the ones who have been walking with Him for a long time. I was telling my friend, "I'm going to stay a baby!" Give me my thumb, I'm going to stay a baby because I love to hear from Him, and I love to see Him. And when I don't, I just feel so lost. I can't really go to the piano and create, I can't do talks and things, I can't share teachings with you, I feel so dry because, before we do a teaching, we go into prayer, and we wait until the Lord has fully released us from prayer and we carry that grace outward into the teaching. And so it's very difficult for me to create anything without His sensible Presence. It's very hard. And thank goodness, before we started Heaven Talk tonight, He let me know just a wee bit that He was with me.

Ezekiel: I remember reading that, when the Lord gives us consolations, or dreams or visions or just a feeling of His Presence, it's kinda like going on a trip to California. You're halfway across Arizona, and the sign says, "Los Angeles, 300 miles". Well, you don't stop at the sign or you'll never get there. It's just a sign to tell you you're on the right road, you're going the right way, and keep moving forward. So, I think probably consolations and feeling the Lord's Presence and sensing that is the same thing: we appreciate it, but we can't always just stop and camp out there, can we? I mean we WANT to because it feels really good.

Clare: And I normally wait until He releases me from prayer. But the devils are opportunists, and they are always looking for ways to accuse us because they know accusation brings us down and separates us from the Lord. And so they want to cause even more of a chasm by lying to us, and saying "God's rejected you, you OURS now, and you're going to Hell." They will come in and try to fill the gap, even with a false Jesus to try and fill the gap.

And those of you who have been with us awhile know we always get a 2nd and 3rd witness, always when we go into prayer and we're given a message. There are times when I know that I know that I know it's the Lord, but other times, I'm not spot-on in picking things up, and I really need to know that it is the Lord. We use our Bible Promises or our Scriptures and we ask the Holy Spirit to pick a reading for us, and then, if we get "lying", forget it. I don't care what was said, I just drop it like a hot potato because it's not the Lord. But if we get "Holy Spirit", or "God's Love", or several different readings...

Ezekiel: Any of the Scriptures along those lines that are affirmative. And that brings to mind, we have to ask for help sometimes. And sometimes we get so cozy with OUR relationship with the Lord, MY snuggly time with the Lord, that we don't go outside of ourselves and ask for help with discernment. Part of it might be fear (what if they don't agree), but try to pray for and look for someone who is mature in the faith that you can trust, and just ask them to be a prayer partner with you. "Would you please pray about something." And maybe you have the agreement that you don't even have to tell them what it is in detail, but if you get a word from the Lord, tell them you're trying to discern something right now. It's okay, and we should go outside of ourselves. We need each other, we got to depend on somebody else sometimes, we can't do it by ourselves.

Clare: Someone like that is a precious treasure, and I thank the Lord for my husband because he's that precious treasure for me.

The first thing that happened to me in this dry cycle was I wondered, "What have I done, Lord? Have I sinned? What have I done?" And there was a situation where I didn't totally obey Him, and I knew what He wanted me to do, and I didn't totally obey Him, and that's when this all began. So, in MY particular case, my disobedience definitely had something to do with the trial.

Now one of those things He's trying to accomplish is humility, and a lack of presumption because, to say, "I know You don't want me to do this, Lord, but I'm going to do it anyway" is presumption. And I deserve to lose His company if I have that kind of an attitude about Him that is so casual.

Ezekiel: He is still God. We were talking last night about the "buddy friendo" syndrome: we're friends, we're chummy, we're mates, and it's good... and sometimes familiarity breeds a little contempt when we start to treat the Lord on a shallower basis than we should. He's NOT just a buddy-friendo, He's not just your chum, He's still God, He's still the Lord and that respect has got to be there.

Clare: It's such an incredible blessing to be able to hear Him, He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. I'll reveal Myself to them." In John, He said this. That has been the Scripture of my life that I love, is being pure of heart and working towards that end. And any kind of vanity or pride or presumption definitely crosses that. I understand that the Lord is correcting me right now. He loves me, and I want to grow in honoring Him in obedience, so I appreciate this correction, even though it's terribly painful. And that's not all of it. The other part is humility, like when you are accustomed to hearing from the Lord, and seeing the Lord, the devil can come in with prideful thoughts. And the bottom line is we are nothing special, we are just committed to serving Him. And the fact that sometimes we see Him or hear from Him is not because we're special, it's because He wants to give us spiritual food that we can share with you. He does that for you, He doesn't do that for us so that we can walk around, saunter around and be arrogant, that has nothing to do with it. It's totally feeding us and filling us to feed you and fill you.

Ezekiel: I'm going to address feelings and emotions. James Dobson wrote a book a few years back, "Emotions: Can we Trust them?" and no, we can't. Can we?

Clare: No, not always. I mean there are sanctified emotions and there are fleshly emotions. There is a sanctified word, and there is a fleshly word. Maybe you will pull up a Scripture to defend something you want to do, and it's not the Lord's will. Or a sanctified dream, I call that a dream with the signature of the Holy Spirit, or a PIZZA dream, or a net-surfing dream. It's like, all of these things accumulate in your mind. So I think with emotions, it's the same thing. The Lord had emotions, so they do serve a purpose. But you have to discern.

Ezekiel: In this day and age, most of us are at least a little bi-polar or manic or whatever so (laughs)... It's definitely not the feeling and we all want to go for that feeling because that's the.. yum-yum, mmm...that's what I want, to feel good. And He certainly cuts those feelings off sometimes.

For me, many times, it's all about relationship with Him, right? And, "do you love Me because I have goodies in My pocket? Do you love Me just because I make you feel warm and cozy? Or will you show up and spend time with Me just for Me, whether you feel anything or not?" Some of the most peaceful times I have had in prayer have been when I haven't heard or seen or felt anything, and didn't feel like I needed to say or DO anything, but there was something about just BEING with Him. Like I have said before, a new husband doesn't want his bride busy about this and busy about that, he just LOVES her and wants her to just maybe sit on the couch with him. They don't have to say or do anything, it's just good to BE together.

Clare: Well, another thing that can come up, if we know that the Lord has drawn the curtain across so we can't see Him, and we know it's because of something we said or we did, we just need to trust that He loves us, and that He's pruning away the dead wood. But there are situations where we've been hurt, or we've had a false word, and it's been devastating, and we shy away from the Lord from that time on because we are afraid of being devastated again. And a lot of that has to do... It's hard work to evaluate a message, and to know that it's the Lord speaking to you. This is really hard work. There's a lot of ridicule in the Christian community about people who say they hear from the Lord. "Oh, they hear from the Lord, alright." (spoken with derision) It's a very personal thing, but when you're in ministry... There are several ministers who talk about how they heard from the Lord and because their ministries have flourished, people tend to believe them because they're good teachers.

The point I'm trying to make is, when that happens, it's like being in a wreck. Like being on the freeway, and getting smashed under a semi. It's nasty. It takes time to recover from that, and to begin to trust again that the Lord will not allow deception. And every single time He has allowed it with me, I could spot pride within myself starting to kind of peak up, little ideas of pride here and there. When He's allowed that false message, He's done it to humble us, and bring us back down to who we really are before God and who God is. It's a privilege to receive something from Him, but if you begin to think you're something special, He loves you enough to correct you.

Ezekiel: I have a question for all of us: Are you afraid (am I afraid) to be mad at God, to be upset with the Lord? I mean in ANY relationship, you might as well be honest.

Clare: You can't hide it from Him, that's for sure!

Ezekiel: If you feel like He's let you down, or let you get hornswoggled, or hijacked somewhere, Lord, You could have protected me. Why did You let the enemy come in? But we're not robots, He's not going to put us on the Duracell battery and let us run around like the energizer bunny, it's a learning process.

Grow and stretch.

Clare: I've heard it said that ALL anger in our lives is ultimately anger against God. When you follow the twists and turn backwards, He is the One who ALLOWS things in our life,

Ezekiel: ...or could have prevented them.

Clare: ...or could have prevented them So all anger really can be traced back to God, so there's no point in hiding the fact that you're angry, you might as well be honest with Him because that's where relationship is: in that gut level honesty. And He knows already what you're upset about. I think He's just waiting for US to figure it out.

Ezekiel: So, there's a period of pouting, maybe kicking and screaming, or wanting our way. The idea of being upset with the Lord or hurt is real, that's an honest reaction. Look at Job: I feel like there came a point in that situation where Job was hurt, ya know? And the Lord, maybe, was kinda hurt some. It was uncomfortable, it was hurtful, a hard thing. And of course the devil was playing it, and jumping up and down with it.

But there was a point where God and Job had to reconcile. And we need to be able to reconcile with the Lord and just get to a point where we finally have to say, "Lord, I just don't know. Yeah, this hurts, in fact sometimes it just stinks. It's hard, and I don't understand it. But maybe I don't need to". Giving up the need to know, and just being okay with the fact that He is God, and we're not. And there are a lot of things that are way far beyond us. We not only don't need to fix everything, but we can't fix everything. So might as well just go easy with it. Somewhere down the line, maybe we will know, maybe we won't. But we gotta keep going, we can't stay in that place of being hurt and angry or upset with Him. Right?

Clare: After years and years of walking with Him, and going through these things, you always know it's for your own good that He's doing it. Whatever He allowed, He's going to bring good out of it, and it's going to be a blessing for everyone concerned, not just us. Like, if you've lost a child or someone close to you, He's going to bring good out of that. And just trusting that He loves us, and He knows what's best for all involved, is huge. But after walking with Him for awhile, you begin to understand that He brings good out of these things, and there's a rhyme and a reason, you might not know it until we're in Heaven with Him, but we can trust that He LOVES us and will bring good out of everything He allows.

Ezekiel: Another issue is unbelief. How many times have we struggled with something that may well be the Holy Spirit, but, we hear it, we read it, we might even write it down... but it doesn't really get into here (heart).

Clare: We don't make it our own.

Ezekiel: Right, right. When was the last time that you honestly asked the Lord (or myself, as well) "Will you give me faith? Or MORE faith?" We can't have what we don't have. And we can't have anything that He doesn't give to us in the first place. So, we have to go to Him and ASK for that faith.

Clare: And of course, read the Scriptures, or listen to teachings or the Scriptures. Faith comes through hearing, so it's important that the Scriptures are fed into us.

Ezekiel: Self-credit...

Clare: ...taking the credit for God's movement in your life.

Ezekiel: Unfortunately, we don't want to think of ourselves like that, or admit it, but sometimes we feel pretty good about ourselves. "I hear from the Lord, I'm doing good, I am helping His people, I am an Okay Guy."

Clare: (laughing) Puke...!

Ezekiel: Is the Lord getting the credit and glory, or are we skimming off some for ourselves? These are just honest questions, we are trying to get to the bottom of why He is allowing dryness. And many times, it's a lesson in different areas.

Clare: Humility is huge. There are so many different ways that He humbles us, and when He notices pride, there are so many ways that we can get proud and we don't even see it in ourselves. It's scary, really, because we don't always see it or feel it, but sometimes we know, "Uh-oh, that felt weird. That's bad, that must be pride". But other times, we don't even see it at all. We are totally blind to it. And He has to stop us to wake us up to see it, and be able to recognize it.

Ezekiel: Another consideration is how small is your world. I mean, are you centered on you? Does everything revolve around me? Like the song, "It's all about you, it's not about me". I have a friend that used to sing, "It's all about me, it's not about you". The thing is, is our world revolving around me, me, me? Once again, we have to go to the Lord and ask Him, "Lord, I know I need to love You more. I need to love souls". Are we going out of ourselves to include other people in our life? Many of you have prayer burdens, obviously, we have prayed for one another, but when it comes down to it, how small is our world?

And is He holding off the goodies so we'll come out of ourselves? I know the best thing in the world for me sometimes, when I am struggling and having trials, is to go do something for someone else, like a visit to a nursing home or whatever. Like I have mentioned before, we run a little food bank here, a little mission, which forces us to get out of ourselves. Plus, we keep an elderly lady in the front house - we just try to help where we can. And it's not easy, and we want to quit sometimes, but I think those are the things that pull us out and keep us from being me-centered.

Clare: And the other side of that is the enemy knows if we are ME-centered then we aren't JESUS-centered. And so again, he tries to cause schism or division between you and the Lord, and he revels in the idea of you thinking you're all alone, and self-pity, that's huge. When self-pity enters, "Oh, poor me", that's poison. That's real poison that turns you inward onto yourself. And you lose sight of Jesus when you turn inward. So when you start to feel that way, you'd better believe there a demon in there and it's a

lie, a lying spirit of condemnation and false guilt.

Ezekiel: I am just thinking while you were talking. Okay...so many of us have been hurt in the church, by the church by other Christians. Maybe we've covered up, maybe we have hurt other people, we don't always recognize that. But have we gotten to the point where we have closed off from life, from the church, from other Christians because we don't want to be hurt? One of the reasons why our world might be so small.

And another consideration to bring up, and we're going to bring up quite a few. We talked about this last night, the Holy Spirit brought up quite a few - many and varied reasons for dryness. And, another reason could be - honestly again, have you said, "no" to God lately? Is there something He has asked of you, that maybe you said, "no" to Him about? That would certainly cause Him to pull away a bit. That hurts Him, it hurts His heart. I know what it's like. I mean, we lived on top of a high mountain wilderness for 5 years, no water, no this, no that, and I remember standing in the middle of a field one day looking up to Heaven saying, "Do you HATE me?". It was so hard for me!

Ezekiel: She loved it. Shangri-la for her - I'm the beach, surfer, water guy. But I remember struggling with Lord, "I wanna run out of here so bad, I could scream." And trying to obey Him, and stay in that place for 5 years - man that was tough! And I remember a couple of times taking "extended ministry trips" away from the mountain, and having this feeling like, "Man, you're running from what you really need to be doing."

So, hoop-de-doo, the MINISTRY went real well, right? Uh....so-so, fifty-fifty...

You can't run from the Lord. But we can always ask Him to make us stronger. That really helps, a huge help. If He is asking you for something, and you just can't gut it out, ask Him for the grace, for the help, and the strength, to turn this bitterness into sweetness. And it's okay - if He's asking you to give up something or let go of something for a time and a season, He's just making room for more. He's just cleaning up and cleaning out what really shouldn't be there for beautiful things He wants to put there.

Clare: It's interesting because my desire always, as a photographer and ice-skating, was to convey the love of the Lord to people. And I was a professional photographer for 25 years, before I got to know the Lord. And when I did get to know Him, I always wanted to use my photographs to illustrate the Psalms, or something like that, and really touch people. Well, there was a point in which He asked me to put away the cameras, and instead of the gift with graphics, He brought up music as a gift. He gave that to me when I was 58 years old.

There was a gap, not a real long one, but the point was He wanted me to put that photography away. And I understand that I had a lot of baggage with that photography, because when you're working like that, and you're professional, you move things around, you get things to go your way, and there's a pride that definitely can settle in, especially if you have a hefty day-rate, you can really get a big head.

And all of that was baggage the Lord needed to flush out of my system. I wish He would someday allow me to shoot again, because I love graphics, I love nature, and I love to portray the beauty that He has created, but He has called me to music, instead. And writing, but the music is huge, and that's a creative thing. And that's a medium that I think conveys MORE of the love of the Lord, and does more for a soul than a photograph. Music is an incredible medium that transports a soul right out of the situation you are

in. So, He knew what He was doing when He asked me to hang up my cameras. And not only because of the pride, but also because He had a better gift for me.

Ezekiel: I remember how hard that was - I remember the tears and all that...the temptations..

Clare: It's still hard. You see a beautiful sunset, and you can't just enjoy the sunset, you want to shoot it. You want to keep it forever.

Ezekiel: I was actually thanking the Lord. (chuckles) The last time I went on assignment with her, I think the jeep was up on 2 wheels on the left side. This all brings up Psalm 94:12-13: "Blessed is the man whom you discipline, Oh, Lord, and whom You teach out of your love to give him rest from days of trouble".

He's just forming us, as a parent does a child. I think of pilots, that are constantly making corrections. They're not saying, "Bad plane, you did wrong", they are just making corrections so the plane will fly smooth. And the Lord is doing the same GPS with us.

Clare: For you pet lovers, you know how your cat can do something really obnoxious, like rip up the couch, or climb the curtains, or go to the bathroom in the wrong place, or jump up on something they're not supposed to be up on (although we don't have rules like that in this house - they can go anywhere they want)? You still love your cat, or dog, or whatever. You still adore them, and you still love them and want to love on them, and hold them and pet them. And you wouldn't dream of getting rid of them over these things that are just little things. Your affection you have for them is so tremendous, and unless the cat is really wicked, and you have delivered it from every demon you can think of, then I could understand finding a new home for it.

But the point I'm trying to make is if you can look at your relationship with the Lord that way, a cat's mentality and OUR mentality are light years apart. Just as our mentality is light years apart from the Lord's mentality. He still loves us, and we are just little creatures to Him. And He still loves us, but even when we do wrong, He is going to still love us, and continue to want to be with us and to draw us close to Him. He's not ever going to desert us, or push us away. Never. Now the devil would like you to think you're being pushed away, but you're not. If He has the intention, like in dryness, to hold you back a little bit, it's only for your good that He's doing that. Just remember how much you love your animals, and when they mess up, you still love them. They're adorable.

Ezekiel: You do. You know you do. You husbands know what it's like, to share the bed...

Clare: ...with a cat. It's cold, throw another cat on the bed. (laughs)

end of video part one

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