

Spiritual Dryness 2 of 2, Heaven Talk



January 15, 2015

Ezekiel: You know, there comes a time when I think the Lord has to show me (and has) who I am without Him.

Clare: Ohhh...that's hard, and that's true. I am going through that right now.

Ezekiel: I mean it's wonderful when His hand is on you, and He's doing this and you're doing that - but all of a sudden, I always think - 'Boy, if He ever took His hand off of us for a moment, we'd probably just about cease to exist.' But, still, if He took a certain anointing, or a touch, or a grace, if He drew it back for a bit, maybe He's reminding us who we really are, and how much we need Him. And I have become very sensitive to my need (after almost 30 years, now, with the Lord) being able to come to the Lord again, and really come to the Father and saying, "Daddy, I NEED Jesus, I've got to have Him. Father I need You, I've got to have You". And maybe I didn't recognize that need in some of the years previous, but in my 30th-something year with the Lord, I am beginning to sense and feel the importance of that again. Did you ever feel like that? Did you ever wonder?

Clare: Yeah. And I think I have shared this a few times, but if you see yourself as a little child trying to get across the Santa Monica freeway at rush hour, trying to get across 8 lanes of rush hour traffic. And you're too little, you can't do it, you're only 6 years old. You are standing there, and if you look up to Heaven and say, "Lord, I can't do this. I'm too little". The world abhors that concept of being too little. They are constantly encouraging you to be big and strong and powerful and independent. And the Lord is totally captured by littleness. He is totally drawn to a soul who is very needy, and KNOWS they are needy, and is relying totally on Him. And there's no shame in that, it actually draws Him in faster to admit that we are too little.

Ezekiel: I remember a man in the park one day and his little girl couldn't have been more than 5 years old. And time after time after time, he would take her to the slide, he'd climb the slide with her, and he would slide down with her. He was trying to get her to where she would go up by herself, and she finally got brave enough to get halfway up, and God bless her, she just looked at him in her little play dress, and said, "Daddy, I can't do it by myself, I need you to do it WITH me".

I don't think the Lord ever gets tired of us asking...you know, like "Gee, Lord - I'm bugging You again..." He's like that good father - and this guy melted by the way: he was on the slide in a heartbeat. He just gave up trying to get her to go up by herself. He had a great day, sliding down together. And that's what I need, my Daddy to do things with me. In fact, I don't go out and do things during the day anymore, I just don't. He's given me the special grace right now to feel like He's the one that's doing something, and He's inviting me, as His child, to come along with Him. "What are You doing today, Lord? What's on Your heart and mind?"

And that's how we make our plans, isn't it? First thing in the morning, we just ask Him what's on His

heart and mind. What does HE want to accomplish? And what's His order for the day. We don't get a super readout for the day, spit out of your computer, and this is the schedule. But there's something about the day and the state of mind you're in when you give it to Him and you know we aren't running this thing, HE is. And we are coming along with Him. And if He's asking me to do anything - every day, I can't tell you the times - this has been a pretty hard winter for us, we are getting a little older and really hard to get out and get wood and do this and do that. And every day, I have to say, "Daddy, I need You to help me. Jesus, Lord, PLEASE, I can't do this. Will you help me cut this wood today? Will you help me find the wood and drag it in here? Will you help me not to be all beat-up afterwards, and banged up?"

Clare: I remember that log you wanted to split, and you couldn't split it. And you asked the Lord to help you, and you hit it, and it split in 4 pieces. That's amazing!

Ezekiel: I had this 16 pound splitter maul. Every time I hit this piece of wood, I didn't know it was all squiggly inside, and cross-grained, and I hit it with everything I had, 6, 7, 8 times and Ding! Light bulb! "Lord, would YOU split this piece?" And I gave it what little bit I had left, and it explodes in 4 different pieces. So it was like, "Couldn't you have asked Me the FIRST time, and saved yourself all that?"

You can't ask enough. In fact, I was in a prayer group one night, and I remember someone asked for something, and she was a little embarrassed and kind of shy, and she said, "Lord, I hate to bother You with something so small, but...", I forgot what she asked, but someone on the other side of the room just kinda spoke a little prophecy of edification. The Lord spoke through this person saying, "Nothing is too great or too little. I delight that you asked".

Pruning. If you've been fruitful...

Clare: ...the dryness could be a pruning.

Ezekiel: That's right. John talks about how He cuts off every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, but every branch that DOES bear fruit, He prunes so that it will become even more fruitful. Right?

Clare: I wanted to share something about the perks. When you go into prayer, and the Lord IS present, and you can really FEEL His presence, you get used to that, and you really are drawn to that, and you feed off of that. But there are times, as Ezekiel said, there are times the Lord wants you to come to Him and be with Him. And are you willing to go into prayer WITHOUT the perks, and come out and feel dry. Which is what we are talking about.

I am reminded of something that happened to Graham Cook. The Lord spoke to him the day before and said He was going to speak to him today, so he went into his study and waited on the Lord: 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9, 10 o'clock, all afternoon, all day long, but nothing from the Lord. At the last hour, 10 o'clock that night, and the Lord showed up. He stuck it out that long. And what an apostle he is! He has a gift of prophecy that is just incredible. And a real profound love for the Lord. That's what it takes sometimes.

Ezekiel: Another honest question: Am I bumping the line, or testing the Lord? Are we playing with temptation a little bit? Are we messing with something that maybe we shouldn't be, in an area where we shouldn't be? Are we trying the Lord's patience in an area, and maybe grieving the Holy Spirit, too? I know what it's like to bump the line.

Clare: Yeah, me, too.

Ezekiel: How many times have we gone to the Scriptures and it's like: "I hope I get permission, confirmation or permission", or "I hope He tells me 'no' because I really don't want to do that." But again, just being honest, is there any area of your life where you've been bumping the line, or testing the line? He'll be silent sometimes. The apostles said very plainly: Don't walk away from temptation -run.

Another thing to look at is, are we making decisions on our own? Maybe even because we don't want to know what the Lord's will is for us, because we want something really badly. I have been so guilty of that, wanting something MORE than the Lord. People talk about statues being idols, but I don't think there's anything that could be more idolatrous than disobeying the Lord to buy an expensive car, or clothing, or jewelry.

Ezekiel: Sneaking out and not asking permission...

Clare: Right - Doing things that have nothing to do with your holiness, or feeding the flock, or anything else, they are just indulgences, so to speak, and you know it. You make that decision on your own - you don't ask Him - because you don't want to hear, "No". So, until you get ahold of yourself and say, "I miss You, Lord, I really miss You and I have been avoiding You because I didn't want to hear no". When you get to that point, and you are ready to lay down your idol, then He'll come around. But that could be another reason for dryness. It's happened with me, for sure.

Ezekiel: Yeah, we can slip around sometimes - it's like He's God, but He's not going to see us...

Remember the train crossing, growing up? We might still see it, we don't pay attention that much anymore, but the train crossing always had the X: Stop, Look, and Listen. 3 golden words.

Clare: Stop, wait, and pray. Submitting yourself to the Lord because, let's face it, if you go out and do something you know you're not supposed to do, you're going to feel terrible later. And you don't want to go through all of that. It's so much easier to say, "no", right there on the spot, than it is to say, "Well, He'll forgive me", or "just this time", or "I really want that", or whatever. And then have to go through all that repenting, and you've wasted time, and maybe wasted money, or maybe you've hurt someone.

Ezekiel: Or just being in a hurry.

Clare: If you're in a hurry, and don't stop and check, then you can still have your "yes", but if you stop and check, you might get a "no".

Ezekiel: Remember Joshua, when they crossed over, this one particular time they got an invitation to come to a great feast. And so they just went on, and didn't think to consult the Lord. And man, did they pay for it! It was rough, really rough.

Clare: That was rough...really rough!

Ezekiel: Beat 'em up pretty bad! If you love Him, TALK to Him. We have to remind ourselves, don't get in a hurry. Am I being compulsive?

Clare: I want to say something on that. The devil is ALWAYS in a hurry, always in a hurry. He wants you to do things quickly so God can't get your attention. So, when there's a push for hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry, there's a demon behind it. 'Cause the Lord is NOT in a hurry. The Lord is very deliberate and very careful. There might be times when He says, "Stop what you're doing now, go and call someone on the phone, they need to hear your voice". There's times when He will do that. But He doesn't push you to act quickly, or to change directions.

Ezekiel: There's not an anxiety about it, not a quick left turn with whiplash. The Lord just doesn't work that way.

Clare: That's a good way of putting that!

Ezekiel: Speaking of being in a hurry or going quickly, once again, in this day and age and generation of manic depressive, bi-polar tendencies, 30-second commercials, or whatever... have I been compulsive? Or impulsive?

Clare: It's on sale! I have been waiting for it to go on sale for all these months and it's finally on sale!

Ezekiel: I'll tell you one way the Lord has helped us get around that is have a "check and balance" system. There are so many couples that I run into that, after 30-something years of marriage, are still uncomfortable with praying together, talking to each other, discerning things, but man! You've got such a safety in your covering, ladies, if you will check with your husbands And guys, don't be so big for your britches that you're just going to take off with the checkbook... Some of you are saying, "Yeah, I get punished if I do that!" - but it's not a matter of punishment or reward, just check it out with your spouse if you are married. You've got a built-in discerning partner, somebody's got the periscope, someone to look out up front.

And your spouse may very well be the one to say, "Look out, there's an iceberg". She'll call me from the store or someplace sometimes and say, "Will you get in touch with the Lord? I saw something..." I know you want to buy something, or we need it, right? So, I'll check with the Lord and tell her over the phone, yes or no, whatever I feel like the Lord has given me.

But there are times when the Holy Spirit will start to gnaw on one or the other of us to touch in - with you or I out there, because we are getting into some sketchy areas and we'll call each other and say, "No, the Lord has given me some concerning Scriptures here. What's going on? Are you getting sidetracked?" Not accusing each other, just - I'm looking out for you."

Clare: That happens with me with the internet a lot. I am a real butterfly. If I see something interesting, I'm going to click on it and listen to it, especially if it's only 5 or 10 minutes long. When you do that, you know how all the windows come up on the side? There are other things on that thread, and you can spend 2 or 3 hours on the internet wasting time. And when he walks into the room, if I've been drifting, I immediately feel that in my conscience. And he's sweet enough to say, "Honey, are you getting off track?"

Ezekiel: And the same with Clare. She'll sometimes peek around the corner and say, "Sweetheart, do you really need to be doing that right now? Does the Lord want you to be working on your music? Or your writing?" You've got to be careful, don't be chiding. The last thing you want is someone picking at you, and nagging you, or bugging you. My point really, at the beginning is, check it out with each other. And if you don't have that kind of relationship, you can ask. Pray for that, and allow the Lord to cultivate that dependency on one another. If you humble yourself and go to your spouse with something, I guarantee the Lord will honor that.

And the spouse, whoever you are, you need not to be a horse's patoot, and don't USE that. Be loving. If someone's coming to you for discernment, be super-humble, and go to the Lord in a humble way. Plus, don't try to get quick, instant answers. Sometimes I just have to tell my wife, "Sweetheart - it just deserves more prayer." Or we'll put that on the back burner of the discernment shelf. It takes a little discipline, and after you're hit the bricks a few times, you learn.

Clare: It's worth the discipline to save the problems later that come from doing things that are not right.

Ezekiel: We talk about being compulsive or impulsive... Another time to be sincere and transparent before the Lord is: Am I HOOKED on something? Wow, Lord - I am feeling conviction. Where my heart is, there my treasure is. Am I hooked on this program? Or this soap opera? Or this such-and-such? This book series? Is something taking more of my time and attention than YOU are, Lord? Than my duties are? Than my spouse? My children?

Clare: Remember, all of this can affect that dryness that we're talking about, all of it.

Ezekiel: That's right. Why would the Lord pull back? To get our attention in some area. I gotta say - have I been hard on someone lately?

Clare: Oh, that's not good.

Ezekiel: Having a hard time with the Lord lately, losing touch with Him? Did we lean on someone hard? Children, family, grocery store clerk, whoever. Were we hard or harsh with somebody? We can't beat our fellow servants, we've been given and forgiven so much. He'll come down on that hard.

Clare: That's huge, that is so huge. Charity is so, so important. Charity and humility are two things that... the Lord, if you're serious about Him and are really committed to Him, He's not going to let you slide in those areas. Because those are the things that He honors the most, that He values the most in a soul, is their humility and their charity. And if we don't reflect that humility and charity of Jesus, He will definitely withdraw from us to get our attention. There's nothing really worse that I have found, personally, in my walk with the Lord that has grieved Him more than being hard and harsh with some judgment, because we hurt people, whether it's spoken or not spoken. An unspoken word still has the ability to cut a soul. You can feel when people are gossiping about you, saying things about you, and it hurts. It's destructive, and He hates to see someone suffer.

Ezekiel: Or you can feel when you have said or done something, you can feel that conviction. Do we heed that conviction, or do we just go on? Or, are we listening to conversations where we should just say, "Stop, this is wrong. We shouldn't be talking like this". And if it continues, remove yourself from that company. That will cause Him to pull back, it sure will.

Clare: Another thing is unforgiveness. And having a root of bitterness. Are we holding a grudge against someone? The Lord has said if you hold grudges against someone, that He's not going to forgive YOUR sins, either. So, He could be looking at you and saying, "And what did YOU do? I see what that other person did, but what did YOU do?" And "We need to straighten THIS one out." But if you forgive another person, then He doesn't have to be so direct with you and get your attention, because He knows you're humble, and you recognized your sin and you're repenting for it. You're repentant.

Ezekiel: I can't tell you the number of times I have seen these imaginary mirrors just fold right out in front of me. But another gut-level thing here is, sometimes you've been hurt so badly. Our youngest daughter met a guy who was questionable, and took off with her the day she turned 18. And she was pretty rebellious at that time, and decided to shoot off, and one thing led to another, and the guy gets arrested on the other end. And the daughter has to clean up and make up and all of that, but the bottom line is, I couldn't stand to hear that man's name! I would try to bring him up in prayer, and try to pray for him... but oh, the fury would just rise up in me, and it was such an acute injury of betrayal, violation of my child. And a good pastor told me, maybe you don't need to be bringing him up so much until you're healed in there. And he talked to me about making an act of the will, like in the old days if you were running from the law or whatever and you got to the horns of the altar, if you could get there, you were safe.

And there are times I feel like I just have to grab onto the hem of His garment, there have been times like that, and say, "Lord, I can't forgive. I mean I want to, I know I need to, but..." And this pastor taught me how basically say, "Lord, will YOU forgive my enemy THROUGH me?" That's another thing we need sometimes, to let the Lord work that forgiveness in us and through us because it's just too acute. But it can be done. And you may have to do it a few times. You may not feel it or sense it, but you've made it an act of your will, a decision to forgive. And it will catch up with you, eventually. It'll heal over.

Clare: Have you been convicted of something, inwardly, and been making excuses on justifying yourself? That may be something.

Ezekiel: Or someone close to you trying to get your attention about something, and you reject it; don't want to hear it. And many times the Lord will pull back to bring that up.

I want to say something at this point: man, this looks like a 21-point check on your car when you go somewhere, but be patient. This is a two-part series for the reason it's just like taking your car in, doing a diagnostic, or going in for tests at the hospital. We are trying to find out what is causing the infection. What is it that's causing this dryness? So we are going down a checklist.

Clare: Right. Is it something I am responsible for? Or is it the Lord just stretching my faith?

Ezekiel: It's not like, gosh, they're in there telling us all the stuff that's wrong with us, or they're bad...No.

Clare: I'm telling you all the things that are wrong with ME...!(laughs)

Ezekiel: (smiling) We are trying to share our own checklist with you.

There was an old custom in the early church, a beautiful custom, I forget about it sometimes. But even growing up, I remember, at the end of the day, some of the grandparents or uncles or aunts, whatever -

would talk about examining your conscience. Did you examine your conscience today? And I remember that as a kid, growing up in an Irish Catholic neighborhood: it was always the blessing before you left, or when you came in. Did you check your stuff? Did you look at your conscience? Of course, we were getting ready for confession on a Saturday, so we wanted to get it right.

But regardless, it is important to confess our sins one to another, but sometimes we need to take a regular look in the mirror. This is a checklist, we are helping to diagnose by the Holy Spirit, we didn't dream this up. He's the One who gave us these things last night, point for point. So, thank you for being patient. These are the same things that we have to look at sometimes. If you want the help, you are willing to do the work.

Clare: Absolutely. Absolutely. There's just nothing worse than feeling cut off from the Lord or feeling He's had to remove Himself for some reason. We want to get to the bottom of it.

Ezekiel: There is so much hope in all of this because, once you do find the problem, and take care of it, all of a sudden that refreshing fellowship comes back. You can feel Him, sense Him, hear Him. Unfortunately, maybe there was a plank in my eye while I was pointing out the splinter in somebody else's. So He'll show you whatever it is that caused Him to draw away, but He'll come back. Remember: this is temporary. It's not forever. It's temporary, I promise.

Clare: This dry spell that I'm going through right now, He was quick to let me know that I had sinned. He didn't leave me in mystery about that, at all.

Ezekiel: Another point I would address may be: Have I disdained or had contempt for God's gifts in my life? Or the Holy Spirit's gifts in my life? Particularly the spiritual gifts. Paul told Timothy: stir in the flame, the gift you received at the laying on of hands. Have we received spiritual gifts that maybe we're a little ashamed of, or hesitant to use because someone's not comfortable with this or that? Or have we just let it fall into disuse? Stir those gifts you've received up. Use your talents, don't bury them.

Clare: And if someone has a gift, and they are being ridiculed for it, don't join in the ridicule because that's a real offense to the Holy Spirit. And that can result in dryness, as well, that you didn't respect God's gift in someone else.

Ezekiel: We need to be encouragers, and draw those gifts out, and build them up.

Clare: Another thing I've been convicted about is I might be working on a song, or a teaching. And those things are important, and require concentration. Someone may come to the door and need food or need help, and I don't always want to go to the door and help them. Sometimes I might be tempted to turn down an invitation to charity. And responding to that invitation to charity has so much more value than anything I could ever do on the piano or in a teaching. That is living faith, that's Jesus present to those people right there. And He will keep me at arms length if I have offended Him in that way. There are just things you can't do, if you're close to the Lord, there's just things you can not do, because you have to honor His Presence in your life.

Ezekiel: I've heard it said we can't stop for everybody, can't help everyone, but Jesus shows up in the distressing disguise of the poor. Whether it's.. need gas, need food, whatever - or the neighbor...who knows what.

Clare: I think one way to sum all this up would be I Peter 4:8: Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins. And I have seen again and again, with the Lord, where a situation will come up, and something needs to be corrected, and the Lord will bring up how much LOVE that person has for other people. And it's obvious that He is so smitten by that person's love for other people, that the minor faults that they might have are DIM in comparison to the goodness and love in their hearts for other people, that charity. And that's what Peter said, "love covers a multitude of sins."

So, all these things we have talked about, all these sins we have talked about, love covers them sometimes. The Lord will still bring them up, but it's not going to be as harsh and severe if you're a loving soul. If you're a mean person, it's going to be harder on you. But if you're a gentle, loving soul, He's going to be more merciful with you. We know how He was with the scribes and Pharisees, it wasn't the prostitutes that got into trouble, it was the religious people who got into trouble.

Ezekiel: Thank you again for joining us on Heaven Talk. Considerations on Heaven, and heavenly considerations. On Earth as it is in Heaven, right?

I want to take a minute to thank those of you who have contributed to help us in the little mission that we run here, the little food bank, and whatever we can do to serve through tapes and videos or books or whatever. God bless you, thank you so much. It really helps keep the wheels turning here.

So, the Lord bless you and keep you, and may He give you the deepest desires of your heart, and contentment, fulfillment, and happiness. Amen. The Lord bless you. Until next time.

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