



# *The Christian Life Institute*

Wednesday, April 15

Thank you for joining us today, as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time, on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.

This message is entitled: Times of Refreshment

Let us read from Acts 3:18-22, “but what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.’”

It’s hard to imagine sometimes when you are in the midst of adjustment that there is refreshment. How can times of change and uncertainty be refreshing? As humans we are prone to categorize - we say, ‘that was fun’ or ‘that was boring.’ We express an opinion that ‘it was good’ or ‘it was bad.’ These responses are often a function of our fickleness. Yet in Christ, He is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow (Hebrews 13:8) - our feelings, perspective, circumstances do not define Him - His nature, His character, His Truth. The revelation of Him in accord with the truth of His Word define Him and a defining trait is - He is refreshment - as He is the Living Water and the Way.

The children of Israel experienced seasons of obedience and disobedience of murmuring and thanksgiving of faith of self-reliance. We too are prone to wander, to doubt, to murmur yet in it all, whether in the desert or in the promised land – whether in the depths of the sea or on the mountain tops, God is ever faithful and it is His nature, which is sinless, pure, holy, righteous, true - that brings us refreshment.

Have you noticed when it is cold that our skin becomes dry and when we are dry that we become parched and when we are parched, we crave refreshment? What does it mean to be refreshed? Think of Abraham who was refreshed at 100 by the birth of his promised son He had to wait until it was impossible and only God could bring a son when Sarah was ‘dried up’ (Genesis 21:5-7). Think of Naomi who walked with Ruth through her bitterness to see God bring a kinsman redeemer for her widowed daughter-in-law when she was a foreigner in a strange land; yet she claimed God and His people as her own (Ruth 1:16-17). Think of Esther, a Jewess, in the Kingdom of a Gentile, Pagan king who declared ‘for such a time as this’ and went into the king and received favor for the salvation of her people (Esther 4:14). Think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel’s three friends who stood in the fire yet saw God in their midst (Daniel 3:16-28) or David who found refreshment in the solace of the Lord while hunted by King Saul (See, the Psalms of David and 1 and 2 Samuel). The Old Testament is filled with the fingerprints of God, with His saving grace, with His spiritual refreshment. Through Paul’s beatings, shipwrecks, imprisonment (2 Corinthians 11:25; See, the book of Acts) - through His trials and tribulations he found refreshment in the nourishment of Christ who strengthened his soul and fed his spirit.

How can we, you and me, see His fingerprints - His restorative refreshment in these times? What are some ways you are feasting on the Bread of Life? In the wilderness and wandering of the Children of Israel they were fed by the hand of God who provided fresh manna every morning (Exodus 16:21). In feast or famine God is our Refreshment - our nourishment - our Provision. How can you draw from Him today all that He delights to richly and freely provide to you? What do you need to re-frame to accurately taste and see the refreshing strength, hope, joy, and peace of the Savior?

He stands ready! He stood with Abraham as he lifted the knife and heard the voice of God say “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” (Genesis 22:10-12). He stood with Elijah on Mount Carmel as he saw God answer his prayer and bring fire on his sacrifice (1 Kings 18:38). He stood with Joseph in the jail when he was forgotten yet received favor (Genesis 39:4) as first in charge and finally when he forgave his brothers and declared “do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today” Genesis 50:15-21). He stood with Rahab as He was faithful to His promise to Joshua when he spared her and her

family (Joshua 2) and to Noah and his family in the flood (Genesis 7) and even to Job who persevered (See, Job) and Jonah who fled (See, Jonah). God is ever faithful. He is true to His promises and his word. He can be trusted, and He will provide refreshment to overcome. We need to stay faithful and stay the course.

During these times, actually during any time, as life is a journey of varying seasons, we must stop, rest, and receive His nourishing, life-giving refreshment. It is odd, how during challenging times we are reluctant to find time, and in calmer times we are apt to fill our time, and in neither time do we choose to take the time for what we need most - refreshing grace and nourishing peace. Let us choose to practice Psalm 46:10, "be still and know that He is God." Let us choose to practice Isaiah 40:31, "but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Let us choose to come to the Fountain of Life and drink from His cool, refreshing waters. Let us be the deer in Psalm 42:1-2, "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

Today, no matter the external events let us be filled with all He provides to equip us to journey forward, press on in Him. He is our strength, our way, our light, our hope -our true refreshment. "Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).

As we shared on Monday, let us choose to walk with The One, True, Living God, and to know the fellowship of the Spirit. Paul reminds us, as he closes his letter to the church in Corinth "[let] the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Let us seek heavenly graces; for "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). Let us seek more faith, more love, more patience, more zeal: let us choose to pursue greater charity, greater brotherly kindness, greater humbleness of spirit. Let us choose to pursue and follow after Christ as his command that "if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Let us pick up our cross, follow after in His footprints, and sanctify everything by His love, loving our neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31).

So, as we close, let us choose to:

- Let us choose to practice Psalm 46:10, “be still and know that He is God.”
- Let us choose to practice Isaiah 40:31, “but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”
- Let us choose to come to the Fountain of Life and drink from His cool, refreshing waters. Let us be the deer in Psalm 42:1-2, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”
- Let us choose to walk with The One, True, Living God, and to know the fellowship of the Spirit.

In this season, and life which is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, have opportunities to, through His strength and His power reflect Him to a broken and hurting world – so, let us persevere and come together, even when technology weary.

Let us agree together to:

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you for joining us for Live Streaming on YouTube. Please join us again on Friday, April 17th at 12:45 CST. Please check out our other videos on YouTube and please subscribe to us on YouTube as we need 100 subscribers for our own YouTube channel.

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