

WCCC 2025

Brother Ted Peng

Those Who Sow in Tears Shall Reap with Shouts of Joy

— Bringing Back the Captives to Zion (2)

God's Glory is Far Beyond What We Can Imagine

Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. I hope we can continue to sing the hymn "How Great Thou Art" (Saints' Hymns No. 7). Our Lord is truly great, and how wonderful it will be when He comes again. The brother leading the hymns mentioned that glory seems like a very abstract thing, and we hope to describe glory completely in one sentence.

When I was young, when I thought about glory and the glory of God, I suddenly discovered that **God's glory is indescribable and infinite**; I thought of the mathematical definition of infinity. I think those of you in high school have learned the definition of infinity: if I know a very large number, like 1,000, infinity is higher than 1,000; or an even larger number like 1 million, infinity exceeds 1 million; or 10 billion, infinity still surpasses that. This is the definition of infinity. I thought the glory of our God is like this, surpassing anything we can imagine; it is infinite. Yet, miraculously, God's glory is indeed something we can see among the brothers and sisters. Like Brother Kang Deng said this morning, **this glory has weight**; whenever you encounter or see God's glory, you feel a heavy weight in it. Many brothers, including Brother T. Austin-Sparks, have said that God's glory is revealed when He is satisfied and pleased: when He is satisfied and when He is pleased.

God Sees the "Remnant" as Servants, Watchmen, and New Wine in the Cluster

Yesterday we shared about seeing God's glory from the book of Isaiah: Chapter 43 verse 7 says, "whom I created for my glory"; verse 4 says, "Since you are precious and honored in my sight," He calls a group of people His precious ones; verse 10 says, "You are my witnesses... and my servant whom I have chosen". From Isaiah's perspective, this is very concrete. When seeing God say "those precious to Me," to God, all Israelites are precious, but there is indeed a group of people who follow God, whom the book of Isaiah calls the "**Remnant**". God calls these people "those in whom I delight"; when He looks toward the future, He says, "You are my witnesses, my servants". These people who follow God,

called the "Remnant," become God's servants following Christ, who is called "My Servant" in Isaiah 42:1. This unique Servant will one day become the Redeemer of Zion, and these people follow Him as His servants. They go through difficulties, and God sends them to be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, saying: do not rest, and do not let God rest, until God makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth.

Coming to the end of this book, God gives these people a name: "**new wine found in the cluster**". This is in Isaiah 65:8:

"Thus says the Lord: 'As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,' so I will do for My servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all'".

This refers to His servants, the remnant, whom He regards as new wine in the grapes; because of them, He will not totally destroy. God expected all Israelites to be good, but they were not; however, there is this group of people who walk with God and are faithful, weeping for God's glory and His house. God says: I see them, and I will not completely destroy the house of Israel.

When God's heart is satisfied and He is pleased, His glory is manifested. This group of people is very quiet; they just follow the Lord, led by Christ. Finally, our God is satisfied and joyful; because of these people, He will not forget His people. Therefore, this group ultimately sees God's glory, pleasure, and praise. Dear brothers and sisters, such a remnant is what we should become. If we live like the remnant and follow the Lord quietly for many years, the result is that we become the new wine in the cluster, and God's glory becomes more obvious. God's glory is not ungraspable; the important thing is that we live like the remnant, and we will see the path full of His glory.

Serving as the Remnant Without a Name

Let me give you an example from my own life. After the first WCCC, my wife and I attended the meeting in Alhambra. I was only in my 40s then. The brothers were very good to me and let me help sweep the floor, arrange chairs, and teach Sunday school. At that time, there were only three little boys in Sunday school. One said to me, "You are so boring". That was a bad experience, but a few years later, that boy was saved. His father told me: "Once when you came to preach the gospel, he was saved". I was happy; as a remnant, we are just faithful in God's house.

Another thing about the remnant: in Isaiah, not a single one of the remnant is named; they have no names. A few years later, we bought an old building for meetings. The government required more toilets. A contractor said to throw the old ones away, but our funds were tight. I asked if I could clean them myself. I went to Home Depot, bought cleaner, and made them sparkle like new. I was happy we didn't have to pay extra.

The wonderful thing is that these remnants have no names. Being faithful in God's house is not about being a speaker or a responsible brother. **The remnant is very beautiful**; we can be just a brother or sister who loves God's house. As we move forward, God's glory is manifested among the brothers and sisters. We grow in God's glory; we live in it, dwell in it, smell it, and inhale it. So do not be discouraged. We cannot define God's glory, but it is beautiful when we are together with brothers and sisters. Please remember, the remnant has no name; they just serve to please God.

I asked a young brother if listening to sermons translated between Chinese and English was difficult. He said, "Yes," but added, "But it can be overcome". I was truly moved. Although we don't speak the same language, we are one in God's house. Every time I see the young people here trying to speak Chinese, or those from China working hard to speak English, my heart is moved. This is the spirit of the remnant: following the Lord and living for His glory. God's glory is not far; it is very close if we live correctly.

Bringing Back the Captives to Zion

Today we discuss bringing back the captives. Psalm 126:1-3 says:

"When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy... The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy".

These verses speak of what has already happened.

Verses 4-6 say:

"Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them".

The first part is about the joy of returning to Jerusalem. The second part looks to the future, asking God to bring back those in spiritual or physical captivity. This involves three things: Zion, bringing back captives, and sowing in tears to reap with joy.

Zion—The Heavenly Jerusalem

In Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the word "Zion" never appears; only Jerusalem is mentioned because the people were in a sad state of captivity without freedom. Zion and Jerusalem have different focuses: Zion focuses on the heavenly Jerusalem, the celestial city (Hebrews 12:22), while Jerusalem focuses on the

earthly city. Psalm 126 uses "Zion" because hope and joy are found in its heavenly status.

Moses Once Prophesied Captivity and Return

The idea of captivity existed in Moses' time, 1,000 years before it happened. In Deuteronomy, Moses said "**God is your life**". He warned that if they obeyed God's laws, He would set them above all nations, but if they disobeyed, they would be scattered. However, if they repented in those places, God would bring them back. It is incredible that Moses spoke these words at the end of his life.

The Northern and Southern Kingdoms Captured

In the following millennium, the spiritual situation declined starting from Solomon. The Northern Kingdom was taken by Assyria and never returned. The Southern Kingdom was eventually taken by Nebuchadnezzar, with the first group including Daniel in 605 B.C.. There were three returns: the first led by Zerubbabel, the second by Ezra 80 years later, and the third by Nehemiah 10-15 years after that. For over 160 years, they had no freedom and lived in extreme difficulty.

Daniel's Testimony and the Kingdoms of Men

Daniel and his friends were brought to the palace and pressured to become Babylonians, but they refused the king's food. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a large statue with a gold head and feet of iron and clay. He explained that a stone not cut by human hands would fall from heaven and smash the statue. This stone represents Christ and His kingdom, which will fill the whole earth. This is comforting: earthly kingdoms come and go, but our God is wonderful.

In a second dream, Daniel told the king that **the Most High God rules in the kingdoms of men**. Nebuchadnezzar respected Daniel and his God because of this. Today, when people see us at work or school, do they see our God? Even in a "24/7" work culture, we should live like Daniel so that others see a wonderful inner quality and respect our God.

Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah: A Spirit of Repentance and Prayer

After 70 years, Daniel read Jeremiah and realized it was time to return. Nearly 90 years old, he didn't just prepare to leave; he fasted and prayed, confessing the sins of his people and asking God to bring them back for His glory. He had been thinking of this for 70 years.

Ezra, born in captivity, was a man who **set his heart to study and obey the law of the Lord**. When he returned and found the people intermarrying with

Gentiles, he wept and prayed in repentance. Nehemiah, a cupbearer trusted by the king, wept when he heard Jerusalem's walls were destroyed. He returned and led the people to rebuild the walls in just 52 days despite intense opposition. Nehemiah practiced **constant prayer**, praying nine times in his book whenever he faced a problem. This shows God was always with him.

Nehemiah and Ezra also coordinated perfectly without conflict, providing a beautiful picture of brothers serving together. After the wall was built, the people gathered to hear God's word. When they understood the word, they wept in repentance, realizing why they had been scattered for 160 years. Nehemiah told them, "**the joy of the Lord is your strength**". God's heart was joyful because His people had finally repented and turned back to Him.

The Importance of Obeying God's Word

Ezra is a role model because he not only studied but also **obeyed and practiced** God's word before teaching it. We often want to understand before we obey, but Jesus said in John 7:17 that if we choose to do His will, we will find out if the teaching is from God. In spiritual matters, you must believe and obey to understand. Especially while young, follow the examples of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. When we understand this, God's glory will always be with us.

Prayer

Lord, You are truly wonderful because of what You did in Moses, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. We pray that You enlighten Your people so we may determine to follow You and give You first place. May we be like Nehemiah, praying at all times; like Ezra, studying and obeying Your word; and like Daniel, relying on You every day. We thank You that Your glory and Your kingdom, that stone not cut by human hands, will endure. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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