

# GRAIN ON MOUNTAIN TOPS

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**BAPTIST HOUR**

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Scripture: Psalm 72:16

In the work I do for my Lord which carries me to many different places, I have frequent experiences of looking down upon tops of mountains. In general they are most unlikely places for grain fields. Sometimes their lofty peaks are rocky and bare without a trace of vegetation. Sometimes they are covered by snow and ice. Sometimes they show the ravages of volcanic activity.

Some while ago I stood upon a mountain which is still affected by volcanic activity. Millions of tons of lava have been thrown up from the heart of the earth, and all over that mountain there are scenes of desolation. One would consider it a most unlikely place for a grain field ever to be found.

Life without Christ is like a barren mountain top. We know this is true as we look into our own experience and the lives of others. When we are away from God our hearts are cold. No amount of the pleasures of the world can take the place of the unspeakable joy that comes when our hearts are right with God and are filled with his spirit. When we are without Christ sin makes our lives ugly. They are scarred and stained by evil things that make us wonder in our better moments how they ever could have come to pass.

Apart from Christ we are unable to bring forth the high qualities of character and personal beauty that God wants in our lives. Jesus said so clearly that he is the vine and we are the branches. He told us that as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, so neither can we except we abide in the vine. When we are apart from Christ, we are like the barren mountain top, unable to produce what we know we ought to produce in our lives and what God is expecting from us.

## **BARREN HOMES**

Many a home is like a barren mountain top. The home was founded to produce joy and blessing for the man and woman who stood at the marriage altar and for the children who came to brighten their love. Yet home becomes a place of strife, hatred, bitterness, jealousy, harshness, and sin when Jesus is not there. Many who listen to this radio broadcast would give every dollar they possess if they could just

have happy homes. Happiness in the home is not a matter of the number of dollars one possesses, but is a matter of whether Christ is in charge.

If we recognize that life without Christ is like a barren mountain top in our own land where the gospel is known so abundantly, it follows that this barrenness is all the more formidable in lands where Christ's name has been but little proclaimed.

Those of us who are privileged to minister in the name of our Lord in lands throughout the world, where spiritual darkness is deep and men bow down to idols made of wood and stone, know how barren human life can be without Christ. People live in fear and without any sense of security or hope. The joys of Christian love and the beauties of Christian grace are unknown.

The comfort of God's Holy Spirit which brightens the darkest hour, and the blessed words of the scriptures are unknown to needy hearts. Encouragement that comes in the fellowship of the church and the warming of heart that results from hearing preaching of the gospel is not available to men and women even though they struggle under terrible loads and are crushed by burdens which make bitter the way of their lives.

Some may visit the nations throughout the world and think that their greatest need is more money, education, food, or better medical care.

## **ONLY EXTERNALS**

These are only the external evidences of the deeper poverty of the human heart. Man throughout the world needs God. He needs to know the blessings which come from personal touch with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Out of this basic relationship of man with God through Christ comes all the joy that blesses human experience. Without it, life at its best is like a barren mountain top, and the joys which it seems to possess soon pass away.

Wherever Christ is received as Saviour, there comes to be grain on mountain tops.

This is a matter of frequent experience throughout our whole land. People look to Christ in simple faith, trusting him as Saviour, confessing their own sin, asking him for forgiveness, and they find that Jesus comes into their hearts, and their

lives are changed. There is no way of explaining the difference in a person before he knows Christ and the person after he comes to Christ except on the basis that Christ has changed him.

A wonderful change is wrought in the soul. Sins are forgiven. There comes a sense of belonging to God. The will is inclined toward the service of God rather than inclined toward the service of evil. The heart of a Christian turns toward Christ as a sunflower turns toward the sun.

When Jesus comes into the heart purity replaces evil. Beauty takes the place of ugliness. Whereas there has been profanity on the lips, praise now rises to God. Whereas the heart has been filled with anxiety and frustration, prayer and faith bring peace and joy.

Whereas life had been filled with concern for gaining the things of this world, and the matters of supreme importance seem to be what shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed. Now in Christ, the kingdom of God is seen to be righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, and the Christian seeks first the kingdom of God, knowing that all other things will be added.

#### **INDIVIDUAL MATTER**

The only way for you to know the great difference that can come in the life of a person who knows Christ is to trust him yourself and know by experience. A person who has not trusted Christ is like a man passing by a great museum. He may see the exterior of the building with a door open inviting him in, but he can never know the wonders inside that museum until he goes in and looks at the articles there collected with great care from over the world.

You may look at Christian experience as you pass by, but you can never know what it means until you confess your own sinfulness and turn to Jesus Christ in earnest trust for forgiveness and deliverance from sin. As soon as you turn, you will find him waiting because he died on the cross and arose from the dead to bring salvation to mankind.

All over the world as Christ is received

as Saviour life is transformed. Men are able to walk in the truth. They are freed from the terrible spiritual bondage in which they had been held. They no longer are in the dark, but they know the truth. To know Christ is to know the truth. It is the secret of knowing the truth in the most important realm of human experience.

Churches come into life and extend their ministries throughout surrounding areas just as in this land. Churches in cities, villages, and rural areas bless the lives of those who choose to live for Christ.

Training is provided so that those young people whose hearts are moved by the Spirit of God and who decide to devote themselves to the service of their Savior among their fellow men can be prepared to serve effectively and proclaim the Word of God aright.

#### **A DESERT STREAM**

Ministries of love and mercy go flowing into the barren places of the world where little children cry and are not comforted, where women suffer in silence, and men are beaten inside. The gospel of Jesus, indeed, is like a stream in the desert flowing out to give life, joy, and blessing to all who receive it.

The most urgent business of our generation is to share the gospel with the whole world. The gospel of Christ can transform the world. We have come into a day where humanity is almost despairing of peace. Efforts for world peace are so precarious that it is like a man walking on a tight wire across a great chasm with a high wind blowing.

All efforts for world peace must rest ultimately upon a broad base of good will in the hearts of men. That good will can come only when man loves his fellow man because he loves God. When a man is conscious of his own sin and has received forgiveness from God because Christ died on the cross, he becomes aware that every other man in the world is the object of his love. His life thereby is spent to bring to mankind, as far as he has any opportunity, the blessings of salvation. This brings him to a sense of brotherhood with mankind and a longing to help rather than to hurt.

This sermon leaflet is free. If, however, you wish to help defray the cost of printing, send your contribution to: THE BAPTIST HOUR, P. O. Box 12157, Fort Worth 16, Texas.

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