

The Lord shall increase you more and more.

(Quality: very good)

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Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [0 : 00] The Lord for all needed help, I venture this afternoon to draw your prayerful attention to Psalm 115 and verse 14.
- Psalm 115 verse 14. The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.
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- There are three words here laid on the mind, and they are these, more and more.
- As we enter through the sparing mercy of our God, upon another year, there is a looking back over all the way that the Lord our God has led us.
- [1 : 40] It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. New every morning of thy compassions.
- Great is thy faithfulness. And humbly we acknowledge with a soonest ear, the Lord hath been mindful of us.
- Though I am shame of it, though I have him oft forgot, his loving kindness changes not.
- The word still stands, O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.
- Mindful of us in all our providential concerns. Our daily need supplied. A strength equal to the day.
- [2 : 50] Divine care. Divine care. Preservation in our going out and coming in. The comforts of this life.
- The homes in which we dwell. The measure of health and strength that God has given. The gift of sight.
- Of hearing. Of speech. The reasoning of our mind. The Lord hath been mindful of us.
- Oh, how sad it is that all these precious gifts are stained with our sin. But, beloved, hast thou, as thou dost look back over the year past, a sweet spot in your remembrance of the mindfulness of your God.
- In tokens of his love. In a revelation of himself. In a crumb of mercy.
- [4 : 07] In a kiss of his mouth. Of a word spoken with divine power. Of gracious comfort. And let us add this.
- Mindful of us in his chasing. Mindful of us in his correction. Mindful of us when that word has entered.
- Thou art the man. The Lord hath been mindful of us. Now, the promise.
- He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. And he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear that the Lord, both small and great.
- Oh, the compassion of our God. Oh, that tender word as he looks down as it were to encourage the little ones in Zion.

- [5 : 21] Small and great. I have been told this afternoon that this is, through the goodness of God, my 30th visit on this occasion or in the new year.
- Following the late Mr. George Rose. I name it because I will remember how the dear man used to speak of this expression, both small and great.
- And he said, if you take a photo of a large family, you put the little ones in front so that they can be seen. God does this.
- Oh, what a mercy it is. God speaks of those that think on his name. Those that hope in his mercy.
- Those that tremble at his word. Those with little faith. Even the bruised reed and the smoking flax.
- [6 : 34] Both small and great. And here is the promise of his blessing. What is it, beloved, that you seek for as you enter this year?
- What about our young friends? Another year, if God spares your life and ours, is before us each.
- What is the chief concern? What is the greatest desire of your heart? Perhaps you have certain ambitions.
- I trust in a right way. It's right to seek to make progress in life. Apply yourself to your studies and to seek a suitable employment and promotion.
- And all right in its way. Is it all? Is it a desire for the Lord's blessing in your soul?
- [7 : 38] The blessings of his love? The pardon of your sin? To know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, Redeemer and Friend.
- These blessings, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He will bless.
- Yes, we've read of some of the ancient blessings of Israel of old. All the tribes got one if left out.
- And what is your response? Is it with one of old, oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed?
- That thou wouldest enlarge my coast? That thy hand might be with me? And that thou wouldest keep me from evil? It's the indeed blessing.
- [8 : 41] It's the blessings that I would speak with deepest reverence. That are saturated, as it were, with the blood of Christ.
- Blessings of his love and grace and mercy and pardon and peace. For my soul.
- The blessing of the Lord that make it rich. And he addeth no sorrow therewith. An overgrace. That where dear Jacob does it, I will not let thee go.
- Except thou bless me. Now the promise, the Lord shall increase you. More and more you and your children.
- There cannot be an increase without first possession, however so small that may be.
- [9 : 50] So the first exercise and concern of our soul as we look at this word is to ask, is it well with my soul?
- Am I a possessor by the work of the spirit of that spiritual life, that work of grace?
- Have I by grace with Mary of old? Mary hath chosen that good part that shall not be taken away from her.
- Oh, have we entered in by that straight gate into the narrow way? Or have we climbed up some other way?
- Resting on outward form? Oh, beloved. Oh, beloved. What a mercy. If you and I are brought in by that one way, Jesus Christ, to plead that name.

[11 : 05] For there is, neither is there salvation in any other. There's none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

But the character here is set before us, that fear the Lord. And you may say, well, am I numbered among them?

We are found with those that fear God, but am I one of them? Not only one with them, but is it true of me?

How are we to speak of it? In this way, the fear of the Lord has a twofold effect in our life.

It brings a separation from that which is sinful of the world and of the flesh.

[12 : 11] But it cleaves to the word of God. It clings to Jesus Christ. It moves in love.

The distinction between a natural fear, a natural dread of the Almighty is this, that as soon as that restraint is lifted, that alarm is silent, there is a running away, a turning away from God and from his word.

But where there is the fear of the Lord in exercise, then there is a moving of your heart in loving obedience to the Lord to seek to turn from that which you cannot ask God to bless and to obey his commands, to walk in his ways and to pray that grace may be given, not to be ashamed of him.

Whatever the cost may be, the fear of the Lord sometimes brings sacrifice, persecution by the world because it will mark you out as different from the rest, completely different from the rest.

Your language is different, your company is different, your behavior is different, your dress may be different and it's no easy thing for a young person and older ones too at times to stand alone but the old hymn said dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to say the Bible's true and dare to make it known.

[14 : 16] these are they that are blessed of the Lord for the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, that hope in his mercy to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive from famine.

You say, that's the blessing, Lord? That's what I want for my soul? I want that deliverance from that death because of that death due to my sin.

I want my soul to be kept alive. I want the blessings of thy love. I want to love thee and know thee as my Saviour, Redeemer and where that Saviour is known, all that my soul could love and praise him more, his beauties trace, his majesty adore, live near his heart, upon his bosom lean, obey his voice and all his will is thee.

I want to come to these three words, more and more. First, a word, I pray, may be a help.

I was going to say to seeking souls, well, that is true, but I believe all who fear God, both small and great, will come in with this.

[15 : 48] In this way, more and more do we feel our need as sinners of pleading for his mercy, of coming to the Saviour.

Oh, is that well-known, oft-repeated prayer strange language to our dear young people or older people?

Have you, before a heart-searching God, ever been led to cry, God, be merciful to me, a sinner?

And I'll tell you this, as you've been trying to pray, and perhaps that's all you feel you can pray, perhaps you can feel you can hardly pray that at all, perhaps it's just under a terrible sense of your sin and burden of guilt with a sense of the holiness and majesty of God that all you feel you can do is grow.

You know there are spiritual growlings. things. I have often named it because it's been a blessed comfort to my soul that these groaning sinners are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

[17 : 29] Oh, we can hardly believe it, but it's true. Because as the word of God declares, and I turn your mind to that word in the 8th of Romans, and likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should, know not what is the mind of the Spirit, we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself make it intercession for us with groaning.

which cannot be uttered, the Spirit's work, and spiritual life, more and more, and it's these of whom God says, there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit because they fear God.

And it is these of whom the Word declares that there is no separation from the love of Christ. And these groaning ones, Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee, are these, as I have just named, more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

But does the devil tempt you? Does the devil shake you sometimes? Attack you and say, it's no good, it's vain repetition, no good you praying for mercy, you're not one of the elect.

Oh, we've known what these furry darks of the wicked are, the enemy coming in like a flood at times. But what does the Word say?

[19 : 32] more and more. Friend, do you know what it is to cry out more and more? I've often been encouraged by that to your blind beggar outside Jericho.

And you remember how that as they tried to silence him as he cried, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

But he cried the more. And I believe some of us know what it is. Under the burden of sin, under the temptations of the devil, in the darkness of our mind, in the low state sometimes that we're in, yet to still, to cry, yet more and more.

Further, love of Christ. Oh, to be led more deeply into the love of Christ. I'm speaking of these words, increase you more and more, you and your children, in a personal way.

We pray that we may know it in a collective way, but I'm speaking for the moment in a personal way. the love of Christ, that love that is like a river, that flows from the throne downward, into which the dear prophet was led, first at the ankles, then the knees, then the nois, and then a river to swim in.

[21 : 15] Oh, Lord, lead me into thy love, that the Lord, direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ, increase you.

Lord, I know so little, I have a sweet hope, some of us say, that thou hast loved me, and laid down thy life for such a vile sinner, but oh, I do want to know more of thy love.

And the apostle Paul prayed for it, didn't he? That he prayed for the family of God, and who are the family of God? The household of faith, and who is the household of faith?

All these that fear God, both small and great. And he said that you may be able with all saints to comprehend what is the length and breadth and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge and to be filled with all the fullness of God more and more.

Lord, oh, may thy spirit shed abroad that love in our soul, lead us more deeply into the wonders of it, the fullness of it, the length of it, that it is an everlasting love.

[22 : 42] Yea, why the prophet speaks, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee, that love everlasting in eternity past, lost and ruined in the fall, called by grace, loved by the Savior, brought at last glory, and the breadth of it, why is love, amazing love, that reaches to the uttermost ends of the earth, the depth of it, that it plucks the brand from the burning, the height of it, thou shalt see my glory soon, when the work of grace is done, partner of my throne shall be, save for sinner, lost, thou me, Lord, lead us more and more, into the wonders of thy love, on such love, my soul still ponder, love so rich, so great, so free, save whilst lost in holy wonder, why, oh God, such love to me, hallelujah, grace shall reign, eternally, more and more, further, growth in grace, you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour,

Jesus Christ, and this growth is for us to grow smaller, is to be brought to our nothingness, grace, I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all and in all, growing in grace, he must increase, I must decrease, and this growth in grace is often in paths that are so mysterious to us, all to humble us, all to try our faith, all to bring us down from proud self, that we may humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, growth in grace, and sometimes it's with a thorn in the flesh, and you have sought with all that it might be removed, it's been hard to bear, it gets under the skin, but the

Lord has not seen fit to take it from you, but he says something to this effect, my grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness, that therefore I glory in mine firmnesses, and this I've looked at again and again, that the power of Christ may rest upon us, oh that growth in grace, and he giveth grace to the humble, oh for the blessings of humility, humility does not mean to be a doormat, does not mean to deviate from the truth, but to have humble views of ourselves, to cling to the truth as it is in Jesus, more and more.

Spiritual life, a life that will not die, we die physically, but whosoever believeth in me shall never perish, but have eternal, everlasting life.

Now as we enter this year, have we not much to mourn over? In this way, we seem to be so far from spiritual liveliness, or that there might be a renewed exercise of our soul, an awakening from lethargy, fatalism, unconcern, and indifference.

[27 : 41] the words of Jesus come to the night, I am come, that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.

How needful for the soul to be exercised, how needful for the soul to be nourished, and are we not sickly spiritually?

where is the appetite for the things of God? Where is the hunger and thirst after righteousness? Where is there this as the heart pants after the water brook, so pants my soul after thee, O God.

Lord, grant this spiritual liveliness exercise of soul. What about fruit?

The Lord Jesus speaks of himself as the vine, he speaks of his people as the branches in that vine, and as you read that 15th chapter of John, you will find this order, fruit, more fruit, much fruit.

[29 : 12] How needful then is the purging of the branch, how needful is the pruning hand of our God that that fruit may be brought forth to his praise, the fruit of the spirit, to his honor, and to his glory.

And speaking on this, my mind now is directed to this, more and more, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

now there can be no blade, no ear, no corn in the ear, without first a root.

And that brings us back to our early remark, the vital possession of spiritual life, the work of grace, that root in Jesus Christ.

But now there is the tender blade, that upward growth from the root formed from that seed that dies, and yet forms that root, upward growth drawn by the influence of heaven, sunshine, and shower.

[30 : 39] And that tender blade, but look, the blade isn't that which the farmer seeks for in the ultimate. He's very thankful to see it, because it's a promise, it's the prospect of the harvest, but it's not the grain, it is the assured evidence of the grain spiritually.

This is our mercy, that that little blade, it may be ever so little, and oh, I hope some of the younger people are likened to this tender blade, and in the tender days of your first love.

Oh, the Lord bless you in those days, but I say it's not the grain. And then there is the ear, and it is then when there's a consciousness as never before, of chaff, and entering into Romans chapter 7, a knowledge of one's sinful self, this wretched, sinful self, and the carnal mind, enmity against God, and yet, the precious grain, and that growth, until there's the full corn in the ear, all to grow in grace, more and more, and for a deeper knowledge of our Savior, the Apostle Paul, why the dear man, he was all, seemed to be so much on the stretch, so much desiring for a closer walk with the Lord, and a larger communion with the

Savior, and he could say that he could count all things but done that he might win Christ for me, to live is Christ and to die is gain, I count all things but done, what things were dear to me, those I count lost for Christ, and yet he says that I may know him, more and more, that I may know the wonders of his love, the sufficiency of his grace, his very presence, that I may enjoy that communion, that I might be conformed to his image, that I might know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, more and more, more.

And then this, and let's just, in our ramblings and wanderings this afternoon, go right back to the harvest field of Boaz, shall we? Who shall we find there?

[33 : 20] well, we shall find Ruth there, and how many Ruths are there here this afternoon? Called by grace, you've turned your back on Noah, you've been brought out with a desire to be with God's dear people, to live with them, to love them, and pray to be one of them.

And the Lord has directed you into the harvest field, and under the ministry of the word, through the reading of the word, in meditation of the word, or sometimes a word dropped from heaven, ever, ever we're aware, there's been a handful of purpose for your soul, it's been right in your path, how do you know?

Because of its blessing, of its power, of its application, it's in the hand of your faith. a handful, it's very small, but it's very precious.

Once, many years ago, I stood in the harvest field of one of our godly farmers, and I just took a grain or two of wheat in my hand, and I thought, yes, there it is, just a grain or two, and I saw the vast field in front of me, and yet it was part of the field, it was real, it was real grain.

Friend, you may not be able to say much, but can you say, yes, I believe there's been something for my soul, I believe God has led me to, it's been a purpose, it's been for me, me, me, unworthy, sinful me.

[35 : 04] Now the word says more and more. What do we read later, the threshing floor? Dear Boaz, he loaded, rose up with six measures of barley, I don't know what quantity, but I have, and I believe it is right, this thought, that it was as much as she could carry.

I believe once or twice in my life, the blessing of the Lord has so flown, as as much as one could carry.

I think particularly of just prior to my baptizing, one memorable Lord's Day night. Oh, friend, yes, and that leads me to this, a sip of the cup, and yet to, with joy, to draw water out of the wells of salvation, and to come to this, my cup, runneth over, all filled with the fullness of the blessing, more, and more, and then, what about faith?

Oh, how weak our faith is, but can you give it up, friend? When everything seems so dark and black, and sometimes it is, oh, can you say, I'll have no more to do with Jesus Christ, no more with that blood, no more with his word, oh, does not the very temptation, darkness, and burden of your sin, dear child of God, lead you, though your faith is so weak and so sorely trying, to cling closer and closer to the Savior, to plead that precious blood, nothing in my hand I bring, but simply to thy cross I cling, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief, Lord, increase our faith, and this faith is sometimes put into the fire, it will never be destroyed, we read in Hebrews these all died in faith, faith never died in them,

I know at death in glory it will be turned to sight, but whilst on earth, faith never died in them, there was overcoming faith, as we read of those who triumph, escape the edge of the sword, and that were not destroyed, that stood firm, and were helped through, as the three Hebrews in the fire, Daniel in the den of lions, and so forth, out of weakness made strong, but we read there were others, they were tortured, they didn't escape the edge of the sword, but their faith endured to the end, and my friend, it's enduring faith, more and more, Lord, when my faith is tried, oh, how I thank God for that word, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season it need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of

[38 : 47] Jesus Christ, yes, you thought it had gone, but no, it's found, it stood the fire, it's, indestructible, the Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children, and so, the psalmist in one says, at one place, I will yet praise thee more and more, oh, how we forget to thank God, I've told you doubt this before, it's well known, but there were two boys, ever so many years ago, it must be now, were playing in the field, and their parents were out, but they said, if it rains, here's the key, you must go indoors, and it rained, and they, obedient to their parents, went to go indoors, and found they'd lost the key, and the older boy said, let us kneel down and ask God, and they did, and God heard their prayer, and they found the key, but what did they do then, the older boy said, let us kneel down again, and thank

God, I believe this at our times, when the heart is taken down from the wellow, I believe this when the love of Christ is shed abroad in our soul, and when my dear friend, Christ is revealed, oh, how we long to praise him, to praise him, oh, for a heart to praise the Lord, a heart from sin set free, a heart that sprinkled with the blood so freely shed for me, another sings, come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy praise, streams of mercy, why your poor heart been pleading for this mercy, and the streams of mercy come down into your soul, streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise, and that mercy you see, it was Jesus my friend, when he hung on the tree that opened the channel of mercy for me, oh, praise him yet more and more, but oh, what it will be in glory at last, one says, then loudest that the crowd are saying well, heaven's resounding mansions ring with shouts of sovereign grace, the Lord shall increase you, oh, that this may be personal, and that we may prove it collectively in Zion, the ingathering of the other sheep, the building up of the walls of

Jerusalem, you and your children, may we ever be praying for grace to speak and tell the generation following, oh, my friends, the commission to God's servants is not only feed the sheep, it is feed my lands, and I, for one, am very distressed if older people murmur against simplicity of truth in attempt, when we attempt to speak in the fear of God, not by innovation, God forbid, sinning, but the simple truth to those that are young, speaking for myself, I believe I've often had a heart softened and touched in the sweet simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus, as the farmer down in Wiltshire once told me, he said, you know, we have the same food for the sheep and the lambs, but for the lambs we have to break it up just a bit more, it's the same food, friend, and so these dear children, these young people, oh, they may say, what mean ye by this service, may the

Lord use us and help us, and oh, we are watched, are we stumbling them, oh, that we may ever help them, be kind, understanding, yet firm, and seek grace to teach them from the word of God, and speak to them of answers to prayer, of those helped by the way, now I must leave it.

The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children, the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

[43 : 39] I believe there's a line of a hymn, I don't know that I can place it, I hope I can, that rather sets that forth, yes, visit, I'll close by that, visit then, this soul of mine, pierce the gloom of sin and grief, fill me, radiancy divine, scatter all my unbelief, this is it, and this crowns it all, more and more, thyself, display, shining, to the perfect day, amen.

Amen.