

Criticism

#0005

Study given by W.D. Frazee – August 10, 1976

This evening our study begins with Luke, the 6th chapter. You and I have heard and read many times the beautiful suggestion to take time day by day to look at the life of Jesus and listen to His teachings, as given to us in the record of His life here on earth. What a wonderful thing it is that, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we have a picture of Jesus. And as we open these pages, we can take our places with His disciples and listen to Him as He speaks to them and to the multitude:

“Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” Luke 6:47-49.

Just a few miles from our Eden Valley sister institution in Colorado, in the big Thompson Canyon, a terrible tragedy has occurred in recent days. A heavy rain in the Rocky Mountains sent a terrific stream of water down the big Thompson River, the big Thompson Canyon. In some places the water was ten-foot walls, water just coming right down rapidly. It surprised the people, and many that were down near the stream camping, or even living, were taken unawares. They know that 88 have died. They are not sure yet how many people are missing. It has been declared a disaster area by the federal government. Troops have been sent in to prevent looting. Quite a disaster.

As I heard about it, I have been thinking about what Jesus said about where to build. Where to build. I have been up and down that big Thompson Canyon many times, and really there are some beautiful spots down by that stream as it winds its way between the canyon walls. Month after month, year after year, it is safe. But this time, it wasn't.

Jesus said, “If you really want to be safe, build on the rock. Get up high, build on the rock.” Read the comment on it in the book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 148.

Now, who does Jesus say is the man that builds on the rock? The one that hears His sayings and what? Does them. And who is the one that builds on the earth or the sand? He hears them but doesn't do them. Now in what ways are the two classes alike? They both hear. So He is not talking about infidels and heathen. He's talking about the people that hear His Word. But some do it, and they are the rock builders. They are building for the storm. There is a great storm ahead in this world, in this church, this beloved church of ours, brethren. And when I stand before you in an opportunity like this, I feel a great longing that God will help me to say the things that will help you build on the rock and be ready for what's ahead. You *can* be.

I want to study a little more now from the life and teachings of Jesus to see if we can get some help this evening in getting ready for what's ahead. We will go to Matthew, the 9th chapter, beginning with the 9th verse.

Jesus passed by the Internal Revenue office, and he saw a man named who? Matthew. He said, "Matthew, I need you. Come with Me." And Matthew did. He left his government job and became one of Christ's disciples. Now Matthew was so happy over this that he gave a party to celebrate. Imagine having a party to celebrate leaving his job with the government! I don't know whether any of his colleagues asked him how much a raise he was going to get in his new job, but he was so happy to be with Jesus. And many of his friends, the publicans and other characters of poor repute, were there.

Now the 11th verse:

"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples,
Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"
Matthew 9:11.

Now, who were they finding fault with? With Jesus. Who was finding fault with Him? The Pharisees. They were finding fault with Jesus. Who did they tell it to? His disciples.

Now let's go over to Matthew, the 12th chapter, verses 1-2:

"At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn;
and His disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the
ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they
said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not
lawful to do upon the sabbath day" Matthew 12:1-2.

Now who were being criticized? The disciples. Who were doing the criticizing? The Pharisees. Who did they talk to about it? To Jesus. Isn't that interesting? The Pharisees were very helpful, weren't they? They were really trying to improve things, weren't they? They were certainly watchful. They didn't overlook a thing. But when they saw Jesus do something that they could criticize, instead of talking to Him, they

talked to whom? His disciples. And when the disciples did something that they thought they could find fault with, they spoke to whom? To Jesus.

Now notice the comment in *Desire of Ages*, page 275.

“It was their policy to accuse Christ to the disciples, and the disciples to Christ, aiming their arrows where they would be most likely to wound. This is the way in which Satan has worked ever since the disaffection in heaven; and all who try to cause discord and alienation are actuated by his spirit”
Desire of Ages, page 275.

I was much impressed with this, dear friends. I have been meditating on it. The apparent conscientiousness, the sanctimonious, critical, fault-finding. But notice the symptom of it. If Jesus, the leader, is doing something that can be criticized, tell the disciples. If the disciples are doing something that can be criticized, complain to Jesus about it.

Now, what does the prophet to the remnant say as to where this kind of thing got started? Who started it? Satan. It didn't start with the Pharisees. Oh no. It was 4,000 years old when they came along. The method was already threadbare with repeated use. Complain to the leader about the mistakes, real or imaginary, of the disciples. Complain to the disciples about the mistakes, real or imaginary, of the leadership.

Whose method is that? Satan's method. Now if somebody doesn't put up too thick a shield, some arrow from the Lord's quiver might pierce his heart as we study tonight. This would be something to be thankful for, wouldn't it, friends? Something to be thankful for. After all, we come to a meeting like this to learn something, don't we? Yes.

“Oh,” but somebody says, “but I want to improve things.” That is what Lucifer said in heaven 6,000 years ago. And do you know he went at that thing so earnestly and so apparently sincerely that he convinced what proportion? One-third. That proved that he at least had something, didn't it?

Now friends, let me ask you something. If Lucifer, right in heaven, could sell that idea to one-third of the angels, do you think it might happen that he could succeed here on earth? Yes. And if he could do it in a place that was *perfect*, do you think there might be opportunity for him to do it in a place that is *imperfect*? Yes. But that doesn't make it any better.

What can we do about it? Well, I'll tell you what we can do about it, friends. We can do what Jesus did. He never allowed the criticism of others toward His disciples to bring the slightest wedge between Him and His helpers. Never did.

“...Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” John 13:1.

He wants us to be like that with one another.

In the old days on the prairies, when the buffalo roamed over those vast areas, the wolves would sometimes come. And of course they were trying to get something to eat; they wanted some meat. They didn't dare tackle one of those old buffalo bulls with his great big horns. But if they could find a calf, they would get hold of that calf.

But do you know what those buffalo would do, a herd of those buffalo? They would form a circle. They would get all the mothers and the calves inside that circle. And then those bulls, with their great bushy heads and their big horns, would just each one look out and the next bull to him just close up next and the next one close up next and clear around. And those wolves, they could just go round and round, but there was no way they could get in. And believe me, they didn't dare get too near one of those bulls. They might get a horn through them!

Oh my friends, we need to learn to close ranks and press together. Close ranks and press together.

Did you notice that interesting statement in the Sabbath school lesson a couple of weeks ago? It is on page 26 of the quarterly. It is taken from the E.G. White Comments, Volume 7 of the Commentary, page 928:

“There is no encouragement given for unbelief. The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust” *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, page 928.

Dear ones, for a moment let me address our leaders. Do not allow the enemy to work upon your mind in planting seeds of suspicion and doubt and distrust concerning the helpers. Don't do it.

Now may I address a word to our helpers, all our students and helpers in any line? Do not allow the enemy to plant in your mind seeds of suspicion and doubt and distrust concerning the leaders. Don't do it. You see the game of the Pharisees, don't you, in what I have studied tonight? That's the game today. And remember, the Pharisees were the most sanctimonious, punctilious people. They were so careful, they doubtless could have told you exactly a list of what were fruits and what were vegetables if they were living today. They would have the list all ready. I'm not sure that each one would have the same list, but that wouldn't make any difference.

And when I say that, I'm not making fun of being careful in health reform. No, no. I'm talking about this thing, dear friends, of allowing our carefulness to make us critical of others, of allowing our conscientiousness on any point – on medical practice, sanitarium work, medical missionary work, Christian education, health reform, dress reform, Sabbath-keeping, anything else – to make us critical. And especially when that takes the form of going to a leader and complaining about the helpers or going to the helpers and complaining about the leaders.

Who did that? The Pharisees. And who prompted them to do it? Satan. And where did He begin that business? In heaven. He has been carrying it on ever since.

You have heard the saying, 'running off like water off a duck's back.' Thank the Lord, dear friends! I want to be a duck when it comes to this kind of thing. I want to be well-equipped with the oil of love that when the rain of fault-finding and criticism comes, it just runs off. And I'll tell you a little secret. The more your attitude is like this, the less of that kind of stuff you will hear. I won't guarantee you'll never hear *any*, but I'm just telling you the truth.

On the other hand, the more the enemy finds that your ears are open to hear criticism – whether either of those that are helping you or those you are helping – the more your ears are open to listen to criticisms and pious suggestions, and even references of how somebody else ought to do something different, the more of that you will hear.

Oh, I want to have confidence in Jesus and in my brethren, what do you say? I believe my brethren love me, and I would hate to have somebody spoil that confidence that's in my heart.

"Well," somebody says, "Brother Frazee, you might get fooled." I might. In fact, I even have been a time or two in 70 years. But listen, folks, listen: I would rather be fooled a time or two in believing my brethren love me than to miss a blessing the other way and be suspicious of somebody who *does* really love me. What do you say?

Oh yes, God can take care of me. Can He take care of you?

"We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust" *Ibid*.

Somebody is saying, "Brother Frazee, you already read that three times." Yes, that's right. I might read it once more. There are some nails that a good carpenter can get through with one hit of a hammer, but I'm not that good of a carpenter.

Now, what did we start with tonight? Build where? On the rock. Not on what? Not on the sand or the earth. And the one who builds on the rock is the one who does what? Hears what Jesus says and what? Does it. So tonight as we face the storm of

the future, the storm of strife, the floods of wrath and violence, we are going to get out of the lowlands. We are going to build on the rock, the rock of love, the rock of doing what Jesus says, the rock of faith in God, in His church, the rock of confidence in one another.

Remember: that doesn't mean we think people are infallible, can't make mistakes. But oh, I thank God, friends, if we will fix our eyes on Jesus, He will give us confidence that He, the same One who took those 12 men full of mistakes and finally brought them through to the place where they could receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, He's developing some people today with a similar view in mind.

Isn't it? Yes. I want a part in it, don't you?

[Testimonies follow.]

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