

How Faith, Hope, and Love Develop

#0624

Study given by W.D. Frazee—August 24, 1968

I invite your attention to 1 Corinthians the thirteenth chapter and the last verse. As the Psalmist says, My heart is inditing a good matter. This is a wonderful chapter and this last verse is the climax.

“And now abideth faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these *is* [love]” 1 Corinthians 13:13.

We would like to spend a little while this morning on each one of this wonderful trio. Thank God they sing in the same key. And what a beautiful harmony they make, faith, hope, love. Do you have them this morning? If you do, you are rich, no matter whether you have a bank account or not. And if you don't have these three graces, then you are poor, no matter if you can write a check for any amount you wish.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love” 1 Corinthians 13:13.

I would like this morning to look first at hope. Turn please to Romans the eighth chapter. While you are turning I want to ask you a question. How do we get hope? How do we develop hope? By having things or by not having things? Think about that for a moment as we turn to the Scripture here in Romans 8:24-25.

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*” Romans 8:24-25.

And so I ask again, How do we get hope? How do we develop hope? By having things, or by not having them? Which is it? Not having them. Exactly. When the thing we hope for is realized then hope is swallowed up in grasp fruition. Don't misunderstand me, there is nothing wrong with receiving the things we hope for. But my point is that hope is developed, not by having things, but rather by not having them.

I remember when I was a boy due to my parents accepting this message shortly before I was born, my father losing his job with the government. We grew up in a poor home for which I am thankful. But among the precious lessons which we developed was the lesson of hope. I remember my younger brother and I how we wished for a

wagon. We didn't have a wagon. We used to go around and sell vegetables in the morning before school. We thought, "Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if we just had a little wagon."

Now when I say a wagon to you younger folks I might explain that we didn't mean a station wagon. Our hopes never got that far into the stratosphere. We were just talking about a little wagon, you know, that we could pull. And do you know one day a doctor friend of my father and mother whose boy had grown up to the point where he was away at college, he came and he brought us this wagon that had belonged to his son. Believe me, dear friends, we were as happy as birds. My, how wonderful it was to have a wagon to go up and down the sidewalks with our load of vegetables, and once in a while when we weren't busy with vegetables to just ride in the wagon. Put one knee in the wagon, you know, and the other one to push on the sidewalk and away we would go.

Well, my point is we enjoyed that wagon far more because we had been what for a while? Hoping for it.

Another thing I wished for when I was a boy was a bicycle. I never got the bicycle. I enjoyed hoping for it for some time. The nearest I got to it was an old frame of a bicycle with two wagon wheels stuck in there. It would at least run downhill.

I was reading an article in the Reader's Digest a few years ago on this point that children today growing up in America very few of them get to enjoy hope, wishing, anticipation very long. Many children get things either before they want them at all, or before they want them very much for very long. You see children with cameras before they are old enough to really appreciate them and they never look back to how they wanted a camera. No. They got it before they wanted it.

And so with a long list of things. And what does our text say?

"Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Romans 8:24.

Indeed, how can we want what we already have? How can we with an earnest desire long for something which is already in our hands? And now to the point. If you pray for hope, if God sees you need the gift of hope how will He develop it in you? By giving you at once the thing that you want? Do you see? Your desire may be long in coming. And as the wise man says:

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" Proverbs 13:12.

I have had that experience during the last week. And let me tell you something,

friends, it is wonderful to see hope fulfilled, prayers answered, desires granted. Our God is a wonderful God and He knows just when to give us what we are longing for. And so as we think of hope and what a brilliant star it is in the sky, as we think of hope and remember that this text says we are saved by hope, oh, let us never grumble. Let us never murmur when God delays the answer to our prayers. Let us remember that in this experience He is developing hope, and let us hope all the harder as the delay seems lengthened out. What do you say? God is developing this wonderful grace of hope in our hearts, in our characters.

Now let us look at the second one in the order in which I have chosen to study them with you this morning, and that is faith. When we think of faith we think of what chapter in the Bible especially? Hebrews 11. I want to ask you something. Does faith coming by seeing things or by not seeing them? Which do you like the best? Do you like to see things, or would you rather be where you can't see?

For many years Abraham was tested as to his faith in the promise of God that he was to have a son. Did the answer finally come? But through many years it was all a matter of what? Faith. Yes. Hope and faith. Hope is something we desire and long for. Faith is believing the promise of God that it will be.

Now faith is not just believing something. Faith is believing what God says. And so turn to Romans the tenth chapter and let us notice this. Romans 10:17.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” Romans 10:17.

Faith comes by hearing what? The Word of God. Faith then is not believing that anything I want will happen, that anything I ask for will be granted. Faith is believing that what God promises will come to me. That what God says will happen. That is what faith is. But remember, faith is developed, not by seeing the fulfillment of the promise, but by not seeing it.

Turn back to Romans the fourth chapter. Notice the experience of Abraham. Notice Abraham's experience both in hope and faith.

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” Romans 4:18-21.

You see how faith operated? It operated in an area when there was no evidence of the senses. If Abraham depended on what he could see, what he could hear, what he could feel, he would have had to say, "We are never going to have a child." But instead he was "strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Romans 4:20-21)

Will the remnant need faith?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" Revelation 14:12.

The faith of Jesus took Him through the darkness of Gethsemane, the shadows of Calvary. You and I are to go through the time of Jacob's trouble. Faith will take us through. The faith of Jesus will take us through.

But faith must be developed. And first it is developed not in the light, but in the darkness. Not by seeing things, but by not seeing them. And many people long for faith. They think they long for faith when what they long for is an experience where they don't need any faith. Faith is like radar. It operates when the darkness falls or the fog surrounds us. Faith is what enables us to believe God when all appearance is to the contrary.

I was reading a letter that Sister White wrote when she was over in Australia to her son James Edson White who was a self-supporting missionary in the southern states for many years. He had multitudes of trials of various kinds. And in this letter that I was reading, the Lord's messenger writing to her son as a loving mother and also as the Lord's messenger said this. She said, the Lord does not always explain the meaning of the trials that come to you because to explain the meaning would be to destroy the object. That is to develop faith in you.

And this is a wonderful thought. Think of Joseph down there in Egypt a slave in Potiphar's house and then unjustly accused and thrown in prison. Did he know the meaning of all that? Oh no. Suppose that when he was carried down there to Egypt God had said to him, Now Joseph, I know this is hard on you but be of good cheer. You will be a servant here in Potiphar's house for ten years and after that you will be in prison for three years, and after that you will be prime minister of Egypt. Would a word from God telling him what that was all about and how it was going to turn out, would it have been easier on Joseph? Would it be easier for you to know why a thing is permitted and how long it is going to last? Exactly. It would be easier. And by the same token it wouldn't develop as much muscle.

You can carry around a five pound package all your life and your muscles will not get very strong. It is carrying heavier burdens all the while that make the muscles grow

stronger. Am I right? And what a test of faith it was to Joseph to be there in Potiphar's house year after year not knowing what it was all about. And then to be thrown into prison unjustly accused and left there he didn't know how long or for what purpose.

You remember once during that imprisonment there came to him a ray of hope. He told the chief butler and chief baker their dreams, and he thought that by that he was going to get out of prison. Did he finally? Yes. But it was two years after that. And he didn't know what the answer was. He didn't know that he would ever get out. But oh, through that whole experience his faith grew stronger and stronger.

I ask again, how does faith come? How is it developed? By seeing things or by not seeing them? Do you see that? Well, if you see that then you see how faith is to be developed. And if God is seeking to develop faith in you, will He always enable you to understand the reason of the experiences that come? Oh no. Faith takes God at His word not asking to understand the meaning of the various trying experiences that come. Praise God, my friends, for faith!

Now we have hope, faith, and what is the third? Love. And Paul says this is the greatest of the trio. What a wonderful grace it is! Wonderful grace.

How is love developed? We have seen how hope is developed. We have seen how faith grows. How is love developed? Love is developed by giving. That is the way love is developed by giving. If you love somebody you want to give them something. And the more you love them, the more you want to give them and the more you give them, the more you love them. Is that the way it works? Exactly. That is the way it works. God so loved the world that He gave. And what did He give? His only begotten Son. He gave His best. He gave all because His love went out.

Now He seeks to develop that love in us. I wonder if there is some little boy or some little girl that has a nickel or some pennies, and I wonder if they love me enough that they would be willing to give me that nickel or some pennies. If I wait it will happen.

[A little girl named Sherry gives Elder Frazee five pennies]

Now I appreciate this and I have said Thank you. Sherry loves me enough to give me these five pennies. In fact she loves me a little more now that she has given me the five pennies. She has an investment in me doesn't she? That is right. Well, did you know, dear friends, that that is why the Lord lets us bring to Him our tithes and offerings? He wants us to manifest love. He wants us to develop love. He wants us to get away from selfishness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death. That is the way it works. If we love we give. And the more we love, the more we give. And the more we give, the more we love. That is what it is for, dear friends.

If we understand that, watch this point, we will never be tempted to resort to the

world's methods to do the Lord's work. We will never be tempted to say, "The more pieces of pie you eat tonight, the better off the Lord's work will be." No. No. We will not be appealing to selfish desire in order to raise money to carry on the Master's purposes. We will be appealing not to selfishness, either the love of entertainment or the love of eating sweet things that most people have more than they need of anyway, we will be appealing to what motive? Love. Love revealed in sacrifice. Love revealed in giving with no thoughts of return.

Well, now Sherrie, I haven't forgotten you. I appreciate these five pennies you gave me. I wonder if you would come up here. Would you come up here again? If you would, I would appreciate it. There is something that I want to do for you. Do you know what that is? What is that? Oh no, that is not a nickel. It is a quarter. I have another one. Now how many quarters have you got? Two quarters. That makes how much? A half a dollar. Very well.

Now is that more or less than the pennies you gave me? It is more. Now you may take those. I am giving those to you. I am giving those to you because I love you. Thank you. You may go back to Momma now.

Now I wonder if there is anybody in the audience that wishes you had loved me enough to give me five pennies? But the point is Sherry didn't know when she came up the aisle five minutes ago and gave me those five pennies that within a few minutes she was going to get how many times as much? Ten times as much. She is ten times richer now than she was five minutes ago. My, my!. Wouldn't you all like to get in on that?

Say, if I could make that kind of an offer and had what it took to back it up you folks would just be coming here and emptying your pockets and emptying your purses. Wouldn't you? And writing checks. Why, we would just have the money heaped up here. Wouldn't we? But do you know, friends, watch this point and don't miss it, if I should tell you in advance and that was the reason you did it, there wouldn't be one spark of love in the whole business. Do you see that?

And so in giving us the opportunity of giving God often hides the returns that are to come. And He lets it look like a sacrifice. Again and again He asks us, not just for money, but for other things and it looks like a sacrifice. Perhaps the greatest example of that in all the history of the ages as far as human beings are concerned is the experience of Abraham when God spoke to him in the night and said:

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" Genesis 22:2.

Ah, my friends, all the money in this world can't begin to compare with the gift that Abraham made. And it was a long gift as those three weary days went by and he plodded on the path that led up to the mountain top. Then came the supreme moment of sacrifice as the son was bound and the knife raised, and Abraham, in effect, gave all that he had as he gave his son. But, ah, then came the wonderful gift of love from God in return as God not only spared Isaac but provided the ram caught in the thicket as a substitute and opened to him as it had never yet before been opened to any human being the wonderful experiences of the plan of salvation in the gift of Jesus to this world.

Did Abraham get ten times more than he gave? Oh yes. But suppose that God had said to Abraham that hour in the night when he called him, Abraham, take your son up there now and offer him, but just before he is slain, I am going to provide a substitute so don't worry. That would have spoiled it all, wouldn't it? There would have been no meaning in the whole thing. It would have been just an acted play like on the stage. Ah, my friends, love is developed by giving when giving seems to be a sacrifice.

But remember it is written in *Ministry of Healing* page 473.

"We are never called upon to make a real sacrifice for God. Many things He asks us to yield to Him, but in doing this we are but giving up that which hinders us in the heavenward way. Even when called upon to surrender those things which in themselves are good, we may be sure that God is thus working out for us some higher good" *Ministry of Healing*, page 473-474.

You cannot out give God. No matter how much you give Him, it opens the way for Him to pour back more and more and more and more. And this relates, not merely to material things, but to everything. Oh, let us give God our love, all of it, what do you say? For the first and great commandment is:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind"
Luke 10:27.

Let's give him everything. What do you say? And if we will, our love will grow as we give and God will find ways of showing His love for us by giving. But remember, if you do it merely on a material basis God will test you. He will let time run along so that you can find out whether it was through love or through selfishness that you were entering into arrangements with Him. There is many a soul who has accepted this message and with bright hope and earnest expectations entered into the service of God and then some test comes. Perhaps financial reverses, perhaps sickness, perhaps the death of a loved one, perhaps difficulty in the church, misunderstanding with brethren, and the discouraged soul says, "If that is what religion means, I am through with it."

What is the matter? My dear friends, there was a screw loose in the experience, something lacking in the surrender. God is going to test your faith. He is going to test your hope. He is going to test your love. For only as these are developed will they grow, but oh, in the converted heart:

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is love” 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Let us thank God with all our hearts for this wonderful gift. What do you say, dear friends? Remember, the One who offers us these gifts gave His life upon the cross that we might share these gifts. There on Calvary faith and hope trembled in the balance but love took Him through, love for you and me. And love will take us through. There may be in the days ahead dark hours when the star of hope seems to be hidden by a cloud, when faith trembles, but love, sweet love, pure love, unselfish love, sacrificial love will carry us through every crisis and lead us at last to the glorious hour when the opening heavens shall disclose our blessed Lord returning in triumph. And when that hour comes, my friends, hope shall change to glad fruition, faith to sight, but love will carry on through the eternal ages and in a million million years from now we shall be entering in ever deeper and deeper into these blessed experiences of love. Giving as we love, and loving as we give.

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