

An Experience

Sermon #0831

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 17, 1957

I would like you to turn to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew as we read the Word of God. You will remember that the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew contains Jesus' prophecy concerning the signs of His second coming. And after He had brought vividly before the disciples the glory of His second advent, and the signs that were to be precede, He directed their attention to the experience they must have if they would be found ready at His appearing.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” Matthew 25:1-13.

Now there are many precious lessons to be drawn from this parable. Chronologically it has its application, as students of this message know, in the summer and fall of 1844. Also in the closing hours of this message down here today.

This morning I am not going to study those things in connection with the parable, only to call your attention to them by way of background. I want to present a very obvious lesson from this parable. That is this.

First, there is something which you must have for yourself which you can get from no one else. If the parable doesn't teach that, it doesn't teach anything.

You get the setting. The Bridegroom is coming. There is a group waiting for Him to come. They have lamps. They have some oil. But while the Bridegroom tarries, they slumber and sleep, and when at midnight the cry is made, the Bridegroom is coming, go out to meet Him, some of them have the necessary oil to replenish their lamps, join the bridal procession, and go into the marriage. Some don't.

It is on that point the whole lesson hinges. The decision hinges. Those that have the oil in the vessels, the lamps, went in. They were ready. Those that didn't have it were left out.

That is the point of the parable, isn't it?

And you notice it is also brought in very vividly by Jesus, that sensing the lack of

something, they try to supply that lack by appealing to others. You noted that in the story didn't you?

They saw some here with lamps burning bright while theirs were going out. And they said, I see you have extra oil. Won't you please give me some?

Ah but the wise said, we have emptied our vessels into these lamps. There was nothing selfish about it my friends. The fact is, just exactly as the parable says, there was not enough that there could be any transfer. Not enough.

“Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves”

Matthew 25:9

But while they went to buy the Bridegroom came.

And that leads me to the second lesson I want to notice. And that is—this experience, what ever it is, you must get it for yourself before the Bridegroom comes. Otherwise it would be too late.

Now I would like to review those two simple lessons and then study them with you.

First, there is something you must have for yourselves, that you can get from nobody else. And the second, is you must get it before the Bridegroom comes. Otherwise it will be too late.

Now what is this? Well my dear friends I want to state it very simply this morning, it is this. It is an experience with God. A personal experience with God.

Now I know that we say that oil represents the Holy Spirit, and that is exactly what it does represent. The fourth chapter of Zechariah makes that plain. But the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give you that personal experience with God. And without the Spirit, you cannot have a personal experience with God.

And I think it will be clear as we go on. We may call the oil the Holy Spirit, and yet we may also understand that what it is talking about is the Spirit in the heart in giving us a personal experience with our Lord.

Just a word of comment concerning the experience in 1844. The time of the midnight cry. Concerning the wise and foolish virgins. Speaking of the wise virgins that had been studying the Word of God faithfully, and earnestly-

“In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience...” *Great Controversy*, page 394.

They had what? A personal experience.

“These had a personal experience of faith in God and His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others...” Ibid.

The others are the foolish virgins.

“...‘took their lamps, and took no oil in them.’ They had moved from impulse” *Ibid.*

What moved them? Impulse.

“Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren...” *Ibid.*

What did they depend on? The faith of their brethren.

“...satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart” *Ibid.*

They didn't have a genuine work of grace in the heart. And while there was some apparent light for a season when there was no particular test or trial, difficulty, as the night of darkness wore on their lamps went out.

And when in the excitement of the midnight hour, they sought for that which the others had, they could not get it my friends. They could not get it.

Oh, let me tell you. There is a crisis ahead of your soul and mine. My dear friends, unless we have the experience when the crisis comes, it will be too late to get the experience then. The crisis will not develop character. It will reveal character!

A number of years ago, in Long Beach, CA, there was an earthquake. A friend of mine, who was there at the time, told me of this experience. He said that the day before that earthquake you go down to a certain section of Long Beach, and drive along, and the buildings looked more or less alike.

But he said the day after the earthquake you could walk down through those ruins, and here and there, there were certain buildings that stood out. What were they? They were buildings that had been built as earthquake-proof buildings.

Whoever built them had thought that someday there might be an earthquake there. And the buildings had been built with that in mind. They stood out, one here, one there.

The earthquake didn't make those buildings strong. It only revealed that the others were not built in the strongest way. It only showed that those few buildings, which remained in that particular area, had been built with such a shock in mind.

So it is in this experience we are studying this morning. There is a great crisis ahead. We are going to be tested and tried. But those who have a personal experience with God, deep down in their heart, are going to go through friends. They don't need to be scared to death at all.

They have the oil.

Those who do not have that personal experience with God will lose out. Now is the time to seek to receive, and to maintain a personal experience with God.

Now I would like to study this personal experience with God in several practical phases of life. First, in knowing that your sins are forgiven, knowing that you are born again, knowing that Christ has accepted you.

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
for I am God, and there is none else” Isaiah 45:22.

Do what? Look! Look where? Look unto Me Jesus says.

What will happen? You will be saved.

Well have you looked? Has He done something for you? Has He taken the sin away, and covered you with His righteousness? Has He taken away the guilt and given you peace? That is what He wants to do, and He wants you to know that in your soul. Not on the testimony of somebody else. No other human being can testify to that my friends. No other human being knows your inmost soul.

God wants to give you in your deepest heart an experience that you know that Jesus has died for you. That you know that Jesus has forgiven your sins. That you know that He has accepted you as His child.

And oh friends, if in this time of comparative peace, and prosperity, we have doubts and uncertainties over that fundamental question, what will we do in that crisis hour?

Suppose you come face to face with death, what will it be a sort of leap in the dark, hoping that you will wake up in heaven but not certain? God forbid my friends.

Just a few weeks ago I was down in Mississippi visiting with a dear friend who was dying of cancer. As I visited with him, and we read the promises together, and prayed together, how wonderful it was to hear the cling ringing expressions of hope

from his heart. He knew that Jesus had delivered him from sin, and the guilt of sin. He knew that Jesus was either going to heal him, and raise him up, or let him go to sleep, and that he would wake-up, as it were, the next moment in the resurrection morning. That hope was bright in his heart.

As I sat there by his bed, and we communed together, it seemed to me just as if we were sitting together on the edge of a canyon, and looking right across into the glorious land of heaven. It seemed as if we could almost look across there and see those green fields waving.

Oh friends, it is a wonderful thing to have an experience with God so that if you are called upon to face death, you can do it without a fear, without a terror, without any uncertainty.

But you know, we need that same experience to face life. Because in some ways life is more serious and solemn than death. It is a solemn thing to die, but a more solemn thing to live, we are told. And I am coming to realize that the only time that we are prepared to live is when we are prepared to die.

So I exhort you friends, if there is anyone here that does not have an experience with God so that you know that your sins are forgiven, so that you know that He has pardoned you, and accepted you, and wrapped you in His love, seek it now. Seek it now.

And where will you get it? "Look unto Me", our text says, "and be ye" what? "Saved all the ends of the earth." There may be human beings that can help you look, but you must look to Him not to them.

Back there in the days of Israel, you remember that the critical, complaining, murmuring Israelites were bitten with venomous serpents. Hundreds and thousands were dying. And as they cried to the Lord, Moses said, Look at this pole. See this serpent that I put up here, this serpent of brass by God's direction, all who are bitten and who will look can live. They will live.

Oh let's go to yonder tent. There is somebody within that tent that is dying. In comes somebody and says, Oh father, father there is good news. What is it son? Oh Moses has a serpent of brass out here on a pole and if you can only get out of this tent and look, you will live.

Oh he says, what good would that do? What good would that do? Oh, the son says, but father it is your only hope, and all over this camp men and women are looking and there living. Oh he says, can it be so? Yes. Oh, but he says, I am too weak. I am almost dead. I can't move out of this tent.

Oh but the son says, father if you will just be willing I will pick you up and carry you out this tent. Alright son. And the son carries that father out of that tent, and he looks at that serpent on the pole, and he lives, as he looks he lives.

Tell me friends, are you willing to have somebody to help you look? But remember you must look to God, not to human beings. They may carry you. They may direct your gaze, but you must look at the Son of God uplifted on the cross, and as you look you will live.

Seek God for that experience my friends. Seek God with all your heart for it is written:

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
for I am God, and there is none else” Isaiah 45:22.

Oh there is a certainty about this thing friends, that God wants us to be happy and glad about. The apostle John was full of this certainty. Notice what he says:

“And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” 1 John 2:28.

We are to have what? Confidence.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life”
1 John 3:14.

We think so? We guess so? We hope so? We believe so? Oh what does he say? We know so. We know! Oh how good it is to know something friends.

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”
1 John 5:13.

Do you have it friends? Is Jesus in your heart? Do you believe that God has given to you eternal life in Jesus? Do you have hold of it by faith? That is this personal experience with God that He wants us to have.

Now another phase of this personal experience with God. It relates to comfort in sorrow. Suppose some disappointment comes along. Suppose a loved one far away is called in death. Suppose someone near you is called upon to pass through great pain or

anxiety. You are with them in it. Suppose misunderstanding develops with somebody. Suppose financial reverses come. Whatever the sorrow, trouble, or perplexity, what do you do about it?

Do you have an experience with God? Do you in a practical way, know the fulfillment of Matthew 11:28, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" Do you? If you do, you have an experience with God. If you don't, that experience is waiting for you.

"And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee,
and thou shalt glorify Me" Psalm 50:15.

"Look unto me and be ye saved", "call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." Have you had any trouble? Who helped you out? Well there are some people who have stories like this to tell. I was in a terrible trouble and so and so Mr. Jones, or Mrs. Brown, or my cousin or my uncle, or some friend came. They did this and that and the other for me, and oh I am so thankful.

Well we ought to be when some human friend helps us. Shouldn't we friends? Certainly we ought to be grateful and tell about it. But oh it is too bad if that is all we know about being delivered out of trouble, just what some human being does for us. If that is all we know there will be a great many gaps, for there are sometimes that human beings can't help us.

God in His providence sometimes allows human friends to fail us so that we may learn how to go to God and get an experience of our own.

“When in trouble, many think they must appeal to some earthly friend, telling him their perplexities and begging for help. ... And all the time there stands beside them the mighty Counselor of the ages, inviting them to place their confidence in Him. Jesus, the great Burden-bearer, is saying, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.” Shall we turn from Him to uncertain human beings, who are as dependent upon God as we ourselves are?” *Ministry of Healing*, page 512.

You say, well isn't it alright to go to others?

Well friends, if one of my tires should get a puncture, I would go to a brother who could help me with it. If I got one of my bones broken, I would go to the doctor, and ask the doctor to help me and set it. I think that is why God has provided mechanics and doctors for, what do you say?

But I want to tell you something. There are some things that only God can do for me. And those things I must go to God to get Him to do for me.

Now there may be times, when, like that poor man in the tent, I have to get somebody who will carry me out of the tent and get me where I can look to God. That is all right. But remember, unless they get me where I can look to God, carrying me out of the tent doesn't heal me of the serpent. Does it? Never.

“Look unto Me and be ye saved.” “Call upon Me in the day of trouble.”

“It is the privilege of every believer to obtain an individual experience, learning to carry his cares and perplexities to God” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 478.

What will you do with your cares and perplexities? Carry them to God! Oh but I can't see Him. That is where faith comes in. Faith says I can kneel right down here in my room, or out under the pine tree, and I know God hears me and does something for me. Is that right? And everyone can have an individual experience learning to carry his cares and perplexities God.

Let's do it friends! I want to tell you something. When we get in a prison cell, or like Elijah, in a lonely cave in the desert, there will be no church elder, no Sabbath school teacher, no minister there to counsel with, and pray for us. If we get help from God, we must get it individually. He wants to give it to us. But the time to get the oil is before the Bridegroom comes.

Now another phase of this personal experience with God. This relates to getting wisdom to know what to do. How many times in the Christian life we come to something and we say shall I do this, or shall I do that? Shall I go to school over here, or shall I go there? Shall I marry this person, or marry that one? Shall I buy this particular piece of property, or buy another one, or none at all?

Shall I wear this dress, or wear my hair in a certain way, or buy this pair of shoes? What about this article of diet, shall I eat that? I could extend the list to a thousand thousand things. Life is made up of thousands of decisions.

You know to some people that is a great worry. It just wears on them. They have to make decisions. It wears them out. They try to get other people to make the decisions as far as they can. Then when they get in a certain place where they have to make a decision, then they try to get other people to help them make that decision. Put the responsibility on others.

And all the while they may be missing this matter of having an individual experience with God. Somebody says, shouldn't we counsel? Oh yes. But that is not to take the place of this at all.

"If any of you..." James 1:5.

What does that mean, any of you? Does that mean you? Any of you!

"...lack wisdom, ..." *Ibid.*

What does lack mean? Need. Doesn't have it.

"...let him ask of..." *Ibid.*

The Bishop? Let him consult with the priest? Let him write a letter to the church elder?

Now as I say don't for a minute think that I am suggesting we should never counsel with people. But first of all, most of all, last of all, and through it all we are to counsel of whom? God.

Well somebody says, the trouble is I am never sure. Well let us read what it says.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally..." *Ibid.*

That giveth to what? To all men! How? Liberally!

"...and upbraideth not..." *Ibid.*

That means He doesn't scold us or blame us because we don't have good sense.

"...and it shall be given him" *Ibid.*

What is the it? Wisdom. Let's read it together.

"If any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" James 1:5-6.

Do you see that the doubtful mind that is wondering whether he will get it or not, it is certain that he will not get it! But the man of faith that asks God for wisdom, it is certain that he will get it. It is either all or nothing. You either get it or you don't. And we are to have an experience with God in this matter.

"Everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God" *Desire of Ages*, page 363.

A what? An experience. That is what I am talking about. That is my subject—an experience. That is the oil in those lamps. If you have it, you are going to go through and be ready when the Bridegroom comes. And if you don't, your lamp is going out one of these days and you will rush around hunting for this one or that one to make a decision for you. But not so "Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy yourselves", but while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came.

Now is the time to get it friends. Get an experience with God in these three things that we have studied.

First, knowing that Jesus has forgiven your sins and has accepted you as His child.

Second, that He is your comforter in trouble.

Third, that He is your wisdom in perplexity.

In other words, Jesus is one who forgives your sins, and makes you know you are His child. Jesus is the one who comforts you in sorrow. Jesus is the one who tells you what to do in every emergency. He is the one that guides you in every decision.

Now you say what need would there be for human beings then? Well God gives us human beings to counsel us, but counsel is never to take the place of our experience with God. It is one of the ways God uses to answer our prayer, but we must all check it.

“It is right to give counsel and suggest plans; but every man should be left free to seek direction from God, whose he is and whom he serves” *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol 6, page 334.

We need counsel. We need to take counsel. We need to give counsel. But that is not a substitute for individually seeking God and getting an experience with Him.

“We are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength” *Desire of Ages*, page 668.

I think that is wonderful friends, what do you say? Isn't that wonderful? You and I can know the will of God. We can have an experience with God. That is the thing—an experience.

Now I would like to give you a little illustration. Some of you folks are used to adding. I want to give you a few figures to add. $3 + 8 + 5 + 2 + 11 + 7 + 9$. What is the answer?

Someone says 45. Others get something else. This is illustrating that people hesitate to give an answer that is different from most other people. Now as it happens forty-five is the right answer.

For those who got the wrong answer, what do you think they ought to do? Do you think they ought to throw their paper away and say well I guess the other folks know how to add and I don't? Do you think if those people who got the wrong answers would sit down with some of these folks that added it up, that they could help them find the answer so they themselves would add it up and find it forty-five? What do you think? I think so.

I want to tell you something friends, when you are adding up to get an answer, it is alright to check with somebody else's answer. But never, and I mean never, accept

their addition and substitute it for your own. Never do that!

I remember an experience that I had several years ago when a building was being put up. The men who were doing the construction had dug the holes for those cement footings, and I came along here one day, and I looked at those, and they were clear out of line with the building, way off at an angle.

I could see it, as we say, at a glance. I went to the construction foreman, and I called his attention to it. No he says, I know they are right, I measured them myself. And he knew a hundred times more about construction than I do, and that is an understatement. He knew a thousand times more about than I do. But I just stood there for a moment or two, presently he began to look at it. He got a line. He says, you are right. I was wrong!

Now the fact that he knew a thousand times more about construction than I do, didn't make him right on that point, did it? And if a thousand master contractors had agreed with him it wouldn't have changed it at all, the thing was out of line.

But notice this was not what was done, not at all, he didn't go back to the workmen and say, well we have dug these holes and I know they are right, but Brother Frazee happens to be the president around here so I guess we will have to take his word for it. We will go ahead and pour the footings in a different place now.

No. I just asked him to check his work. And when he checked it, he saw that he was out of line. That is what counsel ought to help people to do. Do you see what I mean friends? That is a very important thing. Never ask somebody else to take your word in a matter of conscience. And make up your mind that you will never take anybody else's word in a matter of conscience.

Your soul is at stake!

"Everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God" *Ibid*.

But now says one I will tell you. This thing makes me fear and tremble. I can't be sure. Why, even after I pray, and after I study, I don't know whether I ought to do this or I ought to do that. I was talking with a young man the other day, and he was facing a decision. He was not only perplexed about what decision he ought to make, but after I had studied with him a while, his perplexity was on the point, well when will I make the decision? How will I know whether I am running ahead of the Lord, or just doing the thing I ought to do?

I looked at him, and I said, Brother, it is very simple. A dear friend of mine had this saying, just play fair with God. Just play fair with God. In other words, when it comes time for you to make a decision, make the decision you think God wants you to

make. And as to when to make it, make it when you think God wants you to make it.

Now I want to give you the Bible for that.

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not”
2 Corinthians 8:12.

God know that our poor little minds don't know all the answers. But all God wants is our willing hearts friends. “My son,” He says, “Give Me thine heart.” Proverbs 23:26. God knows that we are not wise, that we are foolish. He knows that we are not strong, we are weak. But God says if you will just give Me your heart, your will, your choice, your love, I can supply all you lack.

Now this doesn't make us infallible. We may make mistakes even when our best intentions are to follow God. But I want to tell you something friends, if we are having an experience with God, we will see that God teaches us even through our mistakes.

Let's go back to 1844. When that midnight cry arose, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh,” those people were expecting Jesus to come on the twenty-second of October, 1844. Did He come? No. He didn't come where they were looking. He came to the most holy place in heaven. But they were terribly disappointed, and the foolish virgins who did not have an experience of their own were left in utter despair.

But the wise virgins that had an experience with God, do you know what they said? They said well apparently we have made a mistake, but God hasn't made a mistake. And when the tempter came to them and said, yes, but what kind of God do you have that would let you make a mistake like that when you were trying to serve Him? They could only answer, we don't know the answer to that but someday He will make it plain.

They knew God so well personally, that no matter how they had failed, they knew He had not failed. They kept hold us His hand, as He kept hold of their hand.

Friends, you will have disappointments if you try to do the will of God. You will make decisions and sometimes have to reconsider them. But all the way through that God is teaching you to have an experience with Him. An experience that teaches you the littleness of self, the lack of dependability of your own heart, and that of others, but through it all you are learning more and more to depend on Him.

As the mother eagle pushes her little ones out of the nest, and lets them fall, and how they flutter, and flounder around as they go down in the chasm. And then when it seems that they are about to be dashed to death, she just comes under them with her wings and lets them nestle there.

God will not let you utterly fail my friends. You may seem to fail that you may learn a lesson, but He will not let you utterly fail. He loves you. And He wants you to have an experience with Him. Let's seek Him.

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted..."
2 Corinthians 8:12.

Can you give God that? Can you say to the Lord, Lord I want to be Thine, I want to know thy will I want to do it? I want my sins forgiven. I want to be all like Thee. That is what Jesus wants. Your Choice. Your heart. Your love.

"My son, give Me thine heart,..." Proverbs 23:26.

If you will give God your heart, He will lead you into an experience with Him that you wouldn't trade for all earthly friends, or all earthly fellowship. My son, My daughter, give Me thine heart.

Tell me something. If the dear Savior wants our hearts so much that He died upon the cross to make it possible for us to yield to Him, will He not take us when we come to Him? There can be no doubt about it.

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