

First Day of the First Month

#0595

Study given by W.D. Frazee -1982

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation" Exodus 40:1-2.

God does things in an orderly way. He has a certain time for certain things to take place. It is by God's appointment that you and I are here tonight to start a happy new year. I am not a prophet. I don't need to tell you that this coming year is going to be the worse year this world has ever seen. But I am happy to tell you that it can be the best year in your life and mine, and everybody else who will let God have His way.

The tabernacle that Moses set up on New Year's day was of a divine specifications God gave him directions in Exodus 25 and told him to make it according to the pattern. As Paul puts it:

"See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" Hebrews 8:5.

The great trouble of the world today is simply that men have turned away from the divine blueprint and have set up architectural agencies of their own. Some are building without even consulting their own architects. But thank God there is a people in this world who are looking heavenward for direction.

I want to share some things that have been and are a blessing me, and I present them to you as a kind of a buffet luncheon this new year. You can select whatever you find that will help you. I want to present some wonderful blessing that I get by looking to Jesus. Then I want to present some practical applications of them.

The first is the blessing of acceptance. I get this blessing by looking to Jesus, and I expect to do it every day this year.

I like to be accepted. I find that even a dog likes to be accepted. I have more brains than a dog has, and I need the acceptance more than he does.

Don't you hate to feel rejected, or taken for granted casually? To know that you are accepted is a wonderful thing. God lets human beings in this, but the real acceptance is in Jesus.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" Ephesians 1:6.

That isn't put in the Bible to just fill up space. This tells me that as Christ is God's beloved Son, and if I am in Him, I am part of what is accepted and beloved. Jesus got that all settled in His death and resurrection and ascension and intercession. When He died upon the cross He took my place and bore my sins. He suffered my punishment. When He arose from the dead the Bible says He rose for my justification.

That Sunday morning the first one who saw Him was Mary Magdalene. She wanted to worship Him, but He said, Don't detain me, Mary. Not now. I must go to My Father. Go tell the other disciples that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and Jesus was on His way.

What a wonderful trip that was. For more than thirty years He had been away from heaven, and now He was coming back. In the ages of eternity He had been there as the divine Son, one equal with the Father, sharing all His attributes. Now He is also a member of the human family.

Can I explain it? No, I couldn't even begin to explain it, but I believe it with all my heart. And I thank God that the One who went to heaven that morning went there for me.

When He got there the angels all wanted to worship Him, but He wouldn't receive their worship anymore than He would Mary's worship. Not yet. He went in to the Father, and the Father held out His arms, but Jesus wasn't ready to receive that embrace. There was something on His heart that had to be settled before He could receive the worship of the angels or the embrace of His Father.

What was it? Father, I want those that Thou hast given Me to be with Me where I am.

And He was not thinking merely of a mass of human beings. He was thinking of them individually. He was thinking of me as if I were the only one.

You say, How can that be?

I don't understand it, but I believe it with all my heart because Jesus says so. And the more I look at it the more sense it makes. Why would He come down here for a number of people? He came down for me. I am worth that much to Him. He came down for you. You are worth that much to Him. My point is that when the Father said, Yes, all those people can come, Your sacrifice is sufficient, and You are accepted and all your church is accepted in You, then I was accepted in the Beloved. Do you see the meaning?

If I am in Jesus, I am accepted in Him. Well, I had better stay in Him. What do you say?

This has a very practical application. Where shall I find my joy and satisfaction all this new year. Shall I find it by keeping track of all the good things I did and gloat over them? Oh, no.

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name."

It makes a world of difference whether I find my acceptance in what I have done or what Jesus has done. It is not what these hands have done, but what Jesus did. I am accepted in the Beloved. I think that is something you will want to rejoice over every day this year. I intend to.

Another blessing that I have received and that I expect to receive every day this year is the blessing of looking to Jesus for my power and strength to do the right thing.

The Gospel included not only forgiveness for the past, but power for the future. It includes not only pardon, but victory. It includes not only changing our record, but changing us.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"
2 Corinthians 5:17.

As a result of that, what is the Christian enabled to say?

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"
Philippians 4:13.

Don't forget it is through Christ. That's the point. But don't forget that I can do all things either. It isn't enough for Caleb to drive the giants out. It isn't enough for Paul and Peter to raise the dead. I must get hold of the fact that I can meet my problems and do the work that God has given me through Christ. The same Jesus who pardons my sins has promised to save me from my sins (Matthew 1:21).

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. That is I could if everybody would cooperate. If I can get my wife to be good to me. If I can get my neighbors to be careful how they treat me. If I can get the committees to vote what I think will help me most. If I can get the cooperation of everybody I can get something done. Is that what Paul is saying? No.

It was all right for Paul to write this. Where was he? In a dungeon. Yes, he was in a dungeon when he wrote these words. And he was rejoicing in the fact that the things that had happened to him when they put him in prison were falling out for the furtherance of the Gospel. It is a wonderful thing to be more interested in what happens to the Gospel than what happens to me. When a man has that dedication, along with trust, he can say, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. But we will never get that courage and faith studying for ourselves. Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.

My heart goes out in longing that everybody here tonight will go out these doors strong in the assurance that Jesus is going to keep you from falling this year.

Looking to Him, of course. Peter had to learn this. When he took his eyes off Jesus, what happened on the lake? He sank. Nobody can walk on water by himself. And nobody can live the Christian life by himself. Christianity is not a system of ethics. It is not a list of things you must do or not do. It is an experience of turning from self to Jesus. Depending upon what He has done for us and is doing in us. We are dependent for both.

There is no way to take care of the past except in Jesus. There is no way to meet the problems of the present without Him. I need Him just as much for one as the other. One is just as much a gift as the other. And I thank God that looking unto Jesus we are saved.

Does Jesus strengthen you? How many of you believe it?

Another blessing I get, and expect to get every day this New Year by looking to Jesus, is His guidance. I expect the Lord to reveal His plans and wisdom that I need.

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye" Psalms 32:8.

Who is that? It is you. God will instruct you. He will guide you with His eye. Isn't that what we want to know? Prayer then is not a matter of bringing to God what we want Him to do. We are not to come with a list like we would make out to Santa Clause and say, Give me this and give me that, give me this and give me that. There is nothing wrong in praying for something we think we need or even might want. But remember, the great purpose in prayer is not to get God to give us what we want, but it is to find out what He wants.

It is far better to let God plan for us than to make our own plans. Some people don't even bring their plans to God for Him to bless. But how sweet it is in the ears of God when He hears one of His children say, Father, I have come to find out Your will.

This was the great victory that Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had built that character in choosing always to do His Father's will and seeking His Father's guidance through thirty years. When He was here He was dependent upon His Father just as the same as we are. He had put Himself in that position. Instead of drawing on His own divine resources to meet the enemy, He drew on His Father. Why? So you and I could learn from Him how to do it ourselves. So He claimed this promise in Psalms 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." He knew it by heart.

Was Jesus guided? Will you be guided? Oh, that it may be so for everyone.

God has various way of guiding us. He guides us through His Word and through His providence and by His Spirit, through committees and counsel and all that. But unless I am looking at Jesus I won't understand His leading through any of

these channels. He is guiding with His eye. If someone is guiding you with his eye, where do you need to be looking? You need to be looking to him.

Did you ever see a well-trained child that with just a nod or a look from father or mother will direct that child what to do? It is a beautiful thing. Oh, that you and I may be so sensitive to the will of God, so anxious to do our Heavenly Father's will, and so adapt an experience in learning it that just a nod and look of His eye and we are off on His errand.

It is true that this comes more and more by experience. But unless we are willing to do God's will we will never know the fine details of His beautiful plan. The path that Jesus lead us on is not a path from difficulty or trial. The beautiful thing is that it is a way through those trials and obstacles.

We find by looking to Jesus acceptance, power and strength to do His will, and guidance to know His will. Isn't that wonderful? If we would get even half of that it would be wonderful. It is a package deal. We need the whole package to get any of it the way it should be gotten. Acceptance, power, guidance.

Because I want these three blessing I am thankful for this verse, and I have made up my mind this New Year's Day that I am going to do what this text suggests:

"But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4.

Life comes than by listening to the Word of God. It is more than listening to it. It is by receiving it as a man gets physical life by taking bread, not merely looking at it but by putting it in his mouth and chewing it. Jesus is the author of that, and He says this illustrates how we are to live by the Word. What kind of words? Words that proceed out of the mouth of God.

How would I find that?

Someone says take the Bible.

But when I read the Bible I find what Moses and David and Samuel and Luke and Matthew and Peter wrote. But I want to hear what God says.

The truth of the matter is that if I want to hear what God says I will have to listen to what He says through the Spirit of prophecy from Genesis to Revelation. God has chosen this channel of revelation to communicate His will to human beings. And again and again through the Bible we find instances where people got into all kinds of trouble through not listening to the prophet. They thought their own ideas were better. And again and again, praise the Lord, we have beautiful illustrations of the victories and successes that came by listening to what God said through the prophet. So we have this statement:

"Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" 2 Chronicles 20:20.

It is just like being an ambassador. We send an ambassador from the United States to the court of St. James in England. That man speaks not for himself but for the United States government. The prophet is heaven's ambassador, speaking for God. And if he doesn't speak for God he is not a prophet. He is a false prophet. There is no middle ground. He is either speaking for God or he is speaking for the Devil.

I have made up my mind that I am going to spend more time with the inspired words of God through what we call the Bible and the latter day revelations in the Spirit of Prophecy. I am not going to be so foolish or extreme as to say that I am not going to look at anything except those inspired sources. I merely tell you that I am going to spend more time with them, and that means I have to spend less time with the uninspired. There are only so many hours in a day.

I think I will get along better with that plan. Would you advise me to do it? Do you believe it enough to follow it yourself? If you find you are getting too much of it, let me know. Oh, I thank God for the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

I have been here in this place for forty years this month. One of the things that has inspired me all these years has been the experience in the example of a man by the name of John Burden. Have you ever heard of him? He is the man that God, through the prophet, called to establish Loma Linda, a school for the training of gospel medical missionary evangelists.

I was reading not long ago something that the messenger of the Lord wrote to Elder Burden in 1906. This is a wonderful statement:

"Elder Burden, carry your work intelligently, ever consulting the Word of God, for this Word is very precious to the worker in the cause. Study the messages that God has sent to His people for the last sixty years through the Spirit of prophecy. Do not seek the counsel of men, but by earnest prayer seek the wisdom of God. A mistake has been made in the past by leaning upon the guidance of men. Seek to correct this mistake" *Loma Linda Messages*, page 332.

David sings in the Psalms, I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation (Psalms 119). Oh, I want to be a student of the inspired statements. I want to hear Jesus speaking through Moses and Isaiah and Daniel and Ezekiel, through Peter and Paul and Ellen White.

Just the other day I came across a statement in a book I had read a long time ago. See if you don't enjoy it. It is written by one of the leading workers among us back in 1883:

"Do Seventh-day Adventist believe that Mrs. E. G. White is infallible? The answer is no. Neither do they believe that Peter or Paul was infallible. They believe that the Holy Spirit which inspired Peter and Paul was infallible. They believe

also that Misses White has, from time to time, received revelations from the Spirit of God, and that revelations made to her by the Spirit of God are just as reliable as revelations made by the same Spirit to other persons" *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1883.

So you can see how happy I am more than any other year in my past life to zero in on the inspired instructions. I am at that point in my life where I don't know how long I am going to live, but I know I have lived at least half my life. I hope the Lord comes before I go to sleep, but that is all with Him. I know at least that I am going toward sunset.

I have said that to say this: Do you think that I would spend more time with this and that and miss all these inspired writings? Do you think when I get to the end of the road that I would say, Oh, I wish I had spent more time with the newspaper? More time with the radio and TV? More time with the magazines? More time keeping up with what is going on?

Oh, friends, I know that students of prophecy are interested in what is going on. But we learn more about the meaning of it by digging deep into the inspired writings.

So remember, I have not said I am not going to read anything that is not inspired. I have just said that I am going to spend more time with the original sources, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I don't have any question whether it is going to be good for me. The Lord grant it.

There are some other implications I want to give. If it is really true that my acceptance is in Jesus, if it is really true that He gives me power to do everything He wants done, and if it is really true that He wants to guide me, what should I do when I find myself in difficulties and trials and problems?

There are two things I can do. One thing is to deplore them, and the other is to surmount them. I have found an interesting statement that tells me which to do:

"Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything" *The Desire of Ages*, page 679.

What does it mean to deplore difficulties? Oh, I wish that were not in the way. I want to go ahead, but look at that big log that is in the road. I would go if the way would open. I would do it if I could. But here is this difficulty, this impossibility.

That gives me an out, doesn't it? It is too difficult and impossible.

But instead of deploring difficulties we are called upon to surmount them. What does surmount mean. It means to get on top and go on over. I could do that if it was a molehill. But Jesus says we are to do it with even mountains.

I don't want to be extreme or lead anyone else to. I don't think there is danger to anyone who listens to what God says. But I predict that this year some people sitting right here are going to attempt impossible things for God. We will never do it be weeping and crying and telling about how it can't be done. Oh, no.

Do you remember those 12 men who looked at the land of Canaan that God told them to look over? Ten said, It can't be done. Did they tell the truth. Yes, they couldn't do it.

But there were two other men who gave another report. They were Caleb and Joshua. They said, We are well able to go up and possess it. They had the same spirit that Paul had in writing from the dungeon, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

My ears are listening for that Caleb spirit. Instead of talking about our difficulties, let's find our solution for them.

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