

Take the Cup from His Hand

Sermon #1037

Study given by W. D. Frazee—February 27, 1959

Last Sabbath it was my privilege to be with the brethren on the Idaho camp ground, the week before that at Loma Linda, and the Sabbath before that at the great world conference in San Francisco where around twenty thousand were gathered at the quadrennial convocation. I come from these contacts greatly impressed with two things. One is that we are near the end, and the troublous scenes that precede the end into which the church is already entering. The other is that God has provided the wondrous gift of peace for His people through these changing scenes.

It is a wonderful thing to be in contact with a God who does all things after the counsel of His own will; who is not limited by anything as far as you and I are concerned, except our choice; who is able to do abundantly above all that we can ask or think. And it is a fact that in some of the countries where there is the greatest opposition and persecution at this hour the church is seeing her greatest triumphs.

So it was nineteen hundred years ago. As the Spirit of God was poured out upon His people at Pentecost persecution lifted its cruel head. The hand of oppression was laid upon the church. But instead of stamping out the message of God it only scattered it. They that were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word of God.

Behind the iron curtain and in Catholic lands where the Roman power holds sway persecution is not causing the work of God to stop. It is merely changing the methods of contact. In some cases it is simplifying the work, making the need more apparent for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and causing the believers to plead for it.

I would like to have you turn to Psalm 46. This is a song for the day of war and trouble. It is a battle song for the people of God. It is a most appropriate one for us to learn at this hour of the church's need:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts

is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"
Psalm 46:1-11.

I thank the Lord for this psalm. It is a psalm of comfort and assurance in the hour of peril. If we live out our natural days we may see these things we have read about this morning. The whole earth covered with war. The opposition of kingdoms. God's intervention. His voice sounding down through Orion, "Be still and know that I am God." He makes the wars to cease.

The experience of the people of God is brought out in this psalm. It is one of peace and assurance. We shall need it in the dark hours ahead. Some of us need it now.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

The peace He offers is not something that comes from our being lifted out of trouble. The very verse that promises peace assures tribulation. The very statement of Jesus that tells us He is going to be with us tells us that trouble will be with us.

If we are surrounded by trouble and our peace is with Jesus, then the way to have peace is by looking to Him. The way to have trouble is to look anywhere else. If we look to ourselves, certainly we will not have peace. If we look to people around us they will disappoint us.

Did you ever feel bad because of what somebody did? Maybe because of what somebody didn't do? That can be just as disappointing. Jesus said we would have problems of that type. But He says, In Me you will have peace.

As I have pondered over this lesson in recent days there has come to me the thought that there are only two reasons why I can be unhappy and restless and worried. If I doubt God's ability to handle the situation then I certainly have something to worry about. As I look out over the world and see things that may affect me, if God is not big enough to handle it then I have something to worry about, because I am not able to handle it. Are you? And if God is not master of the situation then it is reasonable for me to fear and worry.

But I don't believe any such thing. I am convinced that God is the master of the situation. He ruleth in the kingdom of men. He is demonstrating it over and over again. He is demonstrating that He is Lord of all and He can do whatever He will not only in heaven but here on earth.

If knowing that God is master of the situation, and I am uncertain as to whether I want His way, then I have something to worry about. Some people are afraid that God is going to get His way. The Devil is. That is exactly what makes the Devil fearful. The Devil is a worried person. Does He have something to worry about on that? Yes, he does. And if I am afraid of God then I too have something to worry about.

Sometimes I think that is our greatest peril. The only way I can be peaceful is to be settled in my choice that God's way shall be my way, and that His will is my will. If there is the least conflict of will, the slightest deviation from an utter surrender, then indeed I am worried and restless. I am anxious. I am afraid that God wants me to do something I don't want to do. I am afraid God is going to let something happen I don't want to happen. I may pray to God and say, Dear Lord, can't you please stop this thing, and in my mind I am afraid that is exactly what He is going to do. Even in our anxiety in the Lord's work we may exercise presumption rather than faith.

Uzza touched the ark. Why? I suppose if somebody asked Uzza, Don't you believe God could take care of the ark? he would have said, Sure, God could take care of the ark. But I happened to be here, and I had better do something about it because it doesn't look as if God is doing anything about it. He was worried about the work of God.

Did the ark come out all right? Yes. Did Uzza come out all right? No. God smote him for his presumption.

God would like for us to have faith. He likes for us to believe that He not only can take care of things but that He is taking care of things, and that we are satisfied with the way He is taking care of things.

Through the Psalms you see the word "Amen" again and again. What does it mean? It means "so be it." Can you say Amen to God? Whenever God says something can you say Amen? The Bible says, "Let all the people say Amen." Let's say it. Let's mean it. Let's not only have confidence that God's way is a good way and that He can get it done, but let's express our choice that it shall be. We are voting with God, not the Devil. We are saying, Lord, I not only believe you can handle things, I believe you are and I like the way you are doing it.

We are in a day when polls are popular. There is the Gallop poll, the institute of public opinion. The idea is to find out what the public is thinking. I wonder if there could be a true poll on the way God is handling thing, and how many would vote with God?

Our president's stock goes up and down. Truman's did when he was president. Sometimes people think the president is doing pretty well. Other times they don't like it. It is interesting that the way people vote on how the president is doing depends on how they happen to personally be effected. If the rains are coming well and there is no drought or floods, and the prices in the stores aren't too high, yet wages are ample, the president's stock is pretty good. But let trouble, disaster, war, inflation, economic troubles come along and people are liable to say they don't think the president is doing so well.

That is the way a lot of people deal with God. You remember that when the angel came to Gideon and said the Lord was with him, he said, Oh my, if the Lord is really with us then why do all these troubles come upon us? And where are all the wonders that our fathers talked about when the Lord was delivering us from Egypt? Look how everything is.

Gideon was very human. He has a lot of cousins and nieces and nephews down here today.

Do we believe that God is master of the situation? Are we satisfied with the way God handles things? Will we vote with God?

A few days ago I was talking with a man I had not seen for a long time. He began to tell me his experience. Certain people promised him something and didn't keep their promise. He was feeling bad over it. It took some time to tell me about it. I could see it was working away at this man's soul. Men who had promised him something were men in position, and he was having to deal with them. I could see that if he wasn't careful he was going to lose confidence in his brethren. Losing confidence in the brethren is sometimes the first step in losing confidence in God. You know that, don't you? It is a good thing to remember.

Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean that any of our brethren are infallible. In fact, the only ones I know are not infallible. But he told me his experience, and I sat and listened. When he was through I felt I knew why I was there at that particular time. I knew why the Lord had led me through some experiences of disappointment and disillusionment and misunderstanding. So I sat and talked with him.

Who is it that is behind our disappointments? Who is it that does the things to us that makes us feel bad? Is God in charge or isn't he?

I will not take that bitter thrust that rent my heart today
As coming from an earthly soul, though it was meant that way;
But I will look beyond the tool, because my life is planned,
I take the cup my Father gives, I take it from His hand.

He knows, and even thus allows these little things that irk,
I trust His wisdom and His love, let patience have her work;
Though human means have brought the sting, I firmly take this stand,
My loving Father holds the cup; I take it from His hand.

Now those who watch may wonder why these things do not disturb,
I look right past the instrument and see my Lord superb;
The trials which would lay me low must pass through His command,
He holds the outstretched cup to me, I take it from His hands.

The scene is in Gethsemane. Jesus has spent those dark hours of bloody sweat and cruel agony. He has wrestled with His Father and came to the point of being fully aligned with the will of God. He has prayed that wonderful prayer, "No My

will but Thine be done." With that settled He came forth, and the mob met Him. They came to take Him. They think they are surprising Him, but He is not surprised. His disciples are surprised. Peter takes that sword and begins to swing it to defend his Master. He aims at Malchus, the servant of the high priest. He cuts his right ear off. Jesus steps forward. He says to Peter:

"Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it" John 18:11.

Jesus, do you mean that the Father in heaven had anything to do with those angry men with those swords and spears coming here and treating You this way?

Jesus says, Yes, they had to pass My Father before a one of them stepped into this garden. And if My Father has let them come, then let them come. And if My Father has let them bind Me, let them bind Me. If My Father has given them permission to beat Me, to spit in My face, to pull the hair from My beard, to bare my back and let the scourge fall until the blood runs down, then I am voting with Him. I know He would not let anything happen to me that would hurt me if there was any way to avoid it and still carry out the plan that He and I have laid together to save men. I would rather save men and carry out the Father's will than I would to escape the suffering and pain and trial. It is My Father who is holding the cup, and I am going to drink it. So Peter, put up that sword, and I will take care of that ear that you have cut off.

Everything was all right with Malchus, but everything was not all right with Peter. He was offended. Why? He didn't understand how God could have anything to do with trouble and disappointment and trial and pain and defeat. He thought that what God was interested in was victory and ease and pleasure and comfort and a good time.

That is what a lot of people think today. Everything is going fine. They get what they want.

I saw an advertisement of some kind of spiritual advisor. It said that if you learned that particular way of religion you could get what you want. It was very bold about it. And that is what a great many people expect out of religion. If they don't get it right away they are ready to change religion and get another slot machine to see if they can hit the jackpot.

There is something higher than that, and it is letting Jesus choose. It is letting God's way be our way.

I will read something from an old book. It was written before I was born:

"But many suffer grief, pain, and disappointment because they are unwilling to fill the humble place which God's providence assigns them where they will remain unnoticed and unknown. *Gospel Workers*, page 459 [old version].

Almost anybody can enjoy a measure of sacrifice for a season if he sees in it the prelude to a great success. I passed over the great plains a few days ago. As we drove over those hundreds of miles through the desert waste I pondered over the ambition of men and women that a hundred years ago sent them across those plains hunting for gold or new farmlands. I marveled at how they could ride behind oxen or walk, some of them even pushing handcarts across those hundreds of miles under the burning sun. Many died, but some got through and a few got gold. For the sake of all that they were willing to risk it.

When Joseph was in Potiphar's house he didn't know he would ever get promoted. When he did get promoted, he didn't know the dungeon was the promotion. Would you recognize it if you got promoted that way?

Who was managing that anyway? Where was God when all that happened? Why wasn't somebody on the job to prevent people from mistreating Joseph? Why wasn't somebody there who recognized not only his ability but his integrity?

That was the thing Joseph had to settle. Thank God he settled it on the right side. He said, My Father holds the cup. I don't understand it, but God understands it. It is all right. I vote with God. And Joseph had peace down there in that prison.

Do you know why I know Joseph had peace down there in that prison? I will tell you why. When he met those men with sad countenances, he noticed it and asked how he could help them. He had so settled his problems that he could take on the problems of others.

God is looking for men, women, and children who can take on the problems of others, who can look at the sad countenances and say, Friend, what is the matter? Can I help you?

Joseph never knew he was in training to become prime minister of Egypt. It was part of God's plan that he should not know.

This matter of promotion is an interesting thing. When I was just a boy I went to work with Elder Tindall in San Francisco. I was with him for several years. Then the brethren sent me out to hold evangelistic efforts.

Several years went by. The General Conference was held in San Francisco. I went as a delegate from Oklahoma. Among the people I saw there was a couple I had baptized in the first effort I had held by myself in San Francisco. I will never forget this dear brother. We visited together and he asked me what I was doing. I told him I was an evangelist and pastor of a church in Oklahoma.

He said, "You are? I thought by this time you would be a lot further up than that. I thought you would be president of a conference."

I smiled at his frankness. I told him that isn't the way it is. This matter of occupying position is not a matter of how long we work. The Lord calls different people to different places. He knows where He wants us. I told him I was very happy in the place God had put me, and we were having a good time.

There is many a man who is unhappy because he is not occupying the position he thinks he ought to have. If he could take it he would. But we are invited to most positions. We don't grab them. At least not in the church. So we wait until the brethren ask us, and sometimes we think the brethren are awfully slow. We wonder if their radio is broken so they can't hear from heaven. We think if they could only get a message from heaven the Lord would tell them to put Brother Frazee in such and such a position.

Is God asleep? Was God asleep those thirteen years when Joseph was a slave and prisoner? No, friends, He wasn't. He that keepth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. God was awake. God was right there. The angels were with him. God was getting him ready for the work that he must do.

Dear friends, 144,000 are in training now. The Josephs and Daniels, the Esthers and the Ruths of this last generation are here. Can you recognize them? No. The whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The more I contemplate the picture the more I believe that the greatest lesson God wants us to learn is the lesson of peace, of being satisfied with the way God does things.

That depends upon two simple things. First, is God able to handle the situation? Can God get done what ought to get done? The answer is yes. Second, do I like the way God does things? Will I vote with God, or will I spend my time trying to persuade Him?

Someone asked Abraham Lincoln during that terrible struggle which rent the nation, "Do you believe God is on our side?"

Abraham Lincoln said, "I am not half so concerned with whether God is on our side as whether I am on God's side."

That is the important thing. If I am on God's side, God and I will win.

Where did they put Daniel? In the lion's den. Why? For worshipping God. If Daniel had a chart, what would the nurse have put on the chart the next morning? A restless night, worried and tossed? No. Was there a man who had a restless night? Yes, the man who put him in. But Daniel went to sleep. I picture him as putting his head back on one of those furry lions for a pillow, sleeping the peaceful sleep of the saints of God.

The next morning the king came around to see how he was. Everything was all right. The king felt better after Daniel came out.

There is only one way to worry, and it is to refuse to be on God's side. If you are with the king in a palace and have all sorts of servants, you had better worry. If you are with Daniel in the lion's den, go to sleep. You have what you want. You have God's will, His way.

Do you want help on this matter? You say, I wish I could be like Daniel and Joseph, not feeling restless and critical. I wish I had that peace so I could see God's hand.

My dear friends, you can have it. Jesus died upon the cross to make it possible. But you will never have it by choosing your way and trying to get God to agree with you. Never in all the world. Sweet peace is the gift of God's love, but it is given to those who give everything to God. If you will give God your way, He will give you His way, and the universe will be better.

When Jesus went to the cross He gave everything for you. As you come to the cross He wants you to give everything to Him, that He may take the things that have made you restless and give you the things that have filled His heart with peace.

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