

Ups and Downs of the Christian Experience

#0829

Study given by W.D. Frazee—September 6, 1957

I want to study with you tonight some very practical things in victory over sin, and in the peace and happiness that God wants to give us in Christian experience. I think all of us who are seeking to live the Christian life find that we have ups and downs. Sometimes we're liable to think that that means that we're not living the Christian life. I want to study with you, tonight, some ups and downs in the Christian life.

When I say ups and downs, I do not mean defeats in the sense of going into sin. I do not mean going out and stealing something, robbing a bank, breaking the Sabbath, swearing, anything like that. I mean the feeling that we're down, feeling that we don't amount to much, feeling that we're weak, feeling that we're sinful.

There are other times when we feel up. We feel on top. We feel courageous. We feel victorious. We wish we could have those experiences all the time. We wish that we could live on the mountain all the time. If we're not careful, we will think that, that's what we ought to do, and that if we were doing what we should, and living the way we should, that, that's where we would be.

But tonight I want to study some things with you in reference to God's plan of victory and the experience that comes to the victorious Christian.

“...the life of His trusting disciples would be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter” *The Desire of Ages*, page 679.

We all know that the unconverted heart, the unregenerate heart, is entirely evil and sinful. We might read from the prophet Jeremiah:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9.

The heart is what? Desperately wicked. Whose heart? Why, anybody's heart. That's the human heart. That's the natural condition of the human heart. As David says:

“...there is none that doeth good, no, not one” Psalm 14:3.

And through the prophet Isaiah, God tells us:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" Isaiah 64:6.

You notice the word "all":

"...we are all as an unclean thing..." Isaiah 64:6.

This is the prophet Isaiah speaking. He's speaking by inspiration. He's speaking of himself and all his brethren:

"...we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags" Isaiah 64:6.

God has promised to cleanse us. He's promised to save us. He's promised to change us. You remember that David prays in Psalm 51:10:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" Psalm 51:10.

David recognized that he needed cleansing. He needed converting. He needed changing. He had just been through an experience that taught him that, very definitely. He had fallen into deadly sin. He'd broken the seventh commandment and that led him on to break the sixth commandment and the ninth commandment. He'd already broken the eighth. He broke about all of them before he got through that terrible experience. Out of the depths of repentance, out of the depths of recognition of his own weak and sinful and lost condition, he cried to God:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" Psalm 51:10.

In the third verse he says:

"...I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" Psalm 51:3.

And so he says in the seventh verse:

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" Psalm 51:7.

There's a great deal of difference between being whitewashed and washed white. You remember the Savior compared some people to white sepulchers, tombs that had been all painted up, as it were, with white on the outside. But what was inside the sepulcher? Dead men's bones. The Savior said some people are like that.

But David, instead of trying to whitewash himself, he prayed for God to wash him white:

“...wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” Psalm 51:7.

My point is that it was from the depths of a bitter defeat that David prayed this prayer. He came to recognize his terrible lost condition. But now, my dear friends, he did not stay in that state of depression. No, he didn't. I turn over to Psalm 40 and I want you to notice David's testimony:

“...I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry” Psalm 40:1.

“I waited patiently for the Lord.” We sometimes want God to do this whole thing in 1 minute. But David found that he had to wait. Wait on the Lord. You'll find that often, in the Psalms: “Wait on the Lord. Wait, wait, I say on the Lord.” Well, here David tells his experience:

“...I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord” Psalm 40:1-3.

My point is, David didn't stay down in the pit. God brought him out. By faith he climbed the heights of holiness. Where he had seen himself as a weak, wicked failure, now he saw himself triumphant in God, forgiven, cleansed, accepted. That is the privilege of every one of us, dear friends.

Now, the thing that I want to notice tonight is that once is not enough in that experience. I do not mean for a minute that we need to go into sin like David did, and then climb up on the heights of victory and acceptance, and then go down into sin again. No. There's a better way. But I want to say this and I don't want you to misunderstand me. It is better to go down into that valley of failure and learn what it's meant to teach us, if the only way we can learn it is by bitter defeat, it's better to learn it than to wait until it's too late and find out the lesson it's meant to teach us.

What is the lesson that it is meant to teach us? Why, the lesson is what I read in those opening texts:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9.

“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as [what?] filthy rags” Isaiah 64:6.

We need to learn that lesson. And that is not simply something we *were*. It's something we are inherently.

You remember that the apostle Paul, in speaking of his experience, he says that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I used to be the chief.” Is that what he said? Well, does it make any difference which tense of the verb we use? Why, it makes all the difference in the world. You know there are people in this world, my friends, that boast of the fact that they’re not sinners any more. They think that’s what they are supposed to do. That’s why they do it, of course.

Now, don’t misunderstand me. We certainly should not boast of the fact that we are sinners. It’s nothing to boast about; but how about this thing? Why did Paul say that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I *am* chief? That’s what he said to Timothy, near the close of his life here in this world. That’s 1 Timothy 1:15:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief” 1 Timothy 1:15.

I wonder why he said that. Well, I’ll tell you, friends, why he said it because it was the truth. That’s why he said it. He meant just what he said. He wasn’t being humble for effect.

Notice how he puts it over in the book of Romans, the seventh chapter. He is just echoing what the Old Testament teaches. I read it from Isaiah. We are all as a what? An unclean thing; and all our righteousness are as filthy rags.

Now listen to Paul:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing...” Romans 7:18.

Notice he does not say, “I used to be a bad fellow, but now since I’m converted, I never have anymore trouble with Paul. Paul is a good man now. Paul behaves himself very nicely.” No, he says:

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing...” Romans 7:18.

All our good works are dependent on a power above us and outside of us. Is that right? I say outside of us. Of course, He dwells in us. But I mean, it’s nothing inherent in us. Therefore our only hope of maintaining that experience of victory is in maintaining the indwelling Savior in our hearts. Is that right? But the presence of the indwelling Savior in our hearts doesn’t mean that we, who are naturally unclean and wicked and selfish and sinful, can be trusted from then on. Oh, no. The Bible is full of examples of people that thought they were all right and thought they were saved, and they stumbled and fell.

Look at King Saul. He started out and the Bible says, “The Lord gave him what? Another heart.” But ah, Saul got to the place where he was trusting in himself, and he went directly against the Word of God, contrary to the prophet

Samuel, and put his own construction on the spirit of prophecy—just like some people want to do today, and just like some people are doing today. He argued that he had kept the commandment of God and done just what the prophet said. He hadn't at all.

You remember that Samuel called it rebellion. He said it was as the sin of witchcraft. My point is that Saul stumbled on the dark mountains and lost his way. And oh, friends, what a pitiful experience king Saul's is. It isn't enough to be converted at the beginning of our Christian life, and then think that we're safe and secure from then on. Not so.

We're told we are made partakers with Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast, how long? Unto the end (Hebrews 3:14).

Now, the apostle Paul had to work at this every day:

"...I die daily" 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Every day Paul recognized (please get this, don't miss it) that he was down here. As far as his nature is concerned, he was down at the bottom; that he was a weak man, a naturally sinful man, and that if he were left to himself he would be defeated. He recognized that. And he recognized that his only hope was in a new miracle of grace.

The prayer David prayed in Psalm 51, he should have prayed before he met those temptations that resulted in committing adultery and murdering Uriah. He should have prayed that prayer before. I want to tell you, my dear friends, God has made provisions to reveal to us our natural weakness and our inherited wickedness in the secret place of prayer instead of having to have it visible to the world, to angels, and to men.

That's the best news I know tonight, as well as the most challenging news. It's a pin prick that ought to break every bubble of self-importance here tonight. If you and I will go into the secret place of prayer and humble our hearts before God, we will find out that we're down here at the bottom, instead of somewhere along the middle, about as good as anybody else. Or maybe in our minds a little better, you understand. We will feel just what Paul felt:

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing..." Romans 7:18.

"...I die daily" 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Paul doesn't say, "I used to have to die daily. But now, praise the Lord, I've gotten past that, and I just sing along from day to day. I just get sweeter and better, and everything is easier all the time." No, he doesn't say that. He says, "I have to die every day."

Now, whatever dying means, friends, I want to tell you it doesn't mean anything pleasant, does it? Oh, no.

“...I die daily” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Paul, you have to die? Why, Paul, no, you don't have to die. Why, Paul, you're such a good man. Oh, Paul, you're such a good man. Of course, Paul, I know you used to be bad, but then, you don't do those things any more. You don't hurt anybody any more. You don't do anything bad. Oh, no, Paul, why, you're a saint.

Paul says, “You don't know me. I know this man. And I have to die every day. Every day I have to die. Anything good you see me do, that's just because I died, and Jesus lives in me today. But I have to die all over again tomorrow.”

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live [I walk around. My hands move. My voice speaks] yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:20.

Oh, I want to tell you, my dear friends, there is no way to reach the heights of holiness unless we go down in the depths of humiliation of self, and recognize our weak, undone, lost condition. It's a hard thing for the pride of man to die. It's a hard thing for some people to admit they ever did anything wrong in the past. Some of us are very free to admit that we used to be this and that and the other thing, but not anymore.

“Well, brother Frazee,” somebody says, “Don't you think we ought to quit doing those things?”

Certainly, we ought to quit doing them, but the only way to quit and stay quit is to recognize that the weakness that caused us to do it is still there, and we have to guard against it by having Jesus in the heart. That's the thing I want you to see. And I repeat, the place to find this out every day is in the secret place of prayer, instead of out in the public.

Let me illustrate it. You may know of somebody, 100 or 1,000 miles from here, that has a great battle over their temper. You may have met somebody like that. You may have seen that person lose his temper again and again. Is there any hope for him?

Somebody says, “Well, if he would just pray enough and get converted, he wouldn't be that way anymore.”

If there is anybody like that here tonight, I want to tell you something. The way to get the victory over that is very simple. But when I say very simple, I don't mean easy. There are some very simple things that aren't easy. The way to get the victory over it is to get down on your knees and cry, before you lose your temper, instead of afterwards. That's it.

But if any of you've ever had any of those experiences, and if I were to ask for a show of hands here, some of us might be embarrassed. I won't. Listen, friends, if you've ever had any of those experiences you know this, you have surprised yourself and disappointed yourself a good many times. Am I correct?

You say, "Oh, I thought I had quit that. I thought I was past that."

Don't fool yourself.

"Ah," you say, "but is there no hope?"

Sure, there's hope. What is the hope? The hope is in what I'm talking about. The hope is in quitting this thing of fooling yourself thinking you're past it. That's the thing.

Let me illustrate it with a dog. Suppose you have a dog, and he bites people. And you whip him. You say, "Look here now, Rover. No more of that. We can't have that." And you just whip him. He weeps and wails and comes around there with his tail between his legs and looks so mournful. You say, "Well, I guess he's learned his lesson."

A few days go by, and he doesn't bite anybody, and you begin to relax a little. You say, "Well, I guess he's learned his lesson."

Then, all of a sudden, you hear somebody out in the yard hollering. You go out there and somebody's saying, "Say, what have you got here, anyway? Your dog has bitten me."

"Oh, has he gone and done that again?"

And so you whip him again.

I want to ask you something. Why does the dog bite? That's his nature. That's why he bites. That's his nature. And your nature is to bite. That doesn't mean it's all right. That doesn't mean it's excusable. But that's your nature. It's to bite. And your only hope is in recognizing that, and crying to the Lord and saying, "Dear Lord, I see that I've that old doggish nature of biting and devouring. Oh, Lord Jesus, let that be crucified. Let that die. And let Jesus live and rule, and let His sweet life, oh, let it be revealed."

My friends, if we'll enter into the secret place of prayer and get Jesus living in us instead of that biting nature, as long as He lives there, we'll be safe in society, but no longer—not a minute longer. Don't fool yourself—not a minute longer. Whenever the chain breaks that holds that dog in the backyard; look out in front. Let anybody beware that happens to get in the path.

So, my dear friends, you may live in your home, in your neighborhood, for a day, a week, a month, as a sweet victorious Christian, showing the love and life of Jesus. And people that have seen you in the past and known what a failure you were, may say, "Thank God, that brother, that sister, has gotten the victory." But I'll

tell you just how long you have the victory. Just as long as day by day you recognize that your natural disposition is dangerous.

You had better get down on your knees and cry to God. You don't have to tell other people about it. They don't have to find it out, bless the Lord. You don't have to take them around to the back yard and show them that snarling dog there, chained and tied. Just leave him there behind the high board fence.

But if you will be willing to seek God, and get a picture of yourself, and recognize it, and don't try to let yourself down easy alone with God; don't try to keep from going down, you need to go down. Down? The mightiest of the saints of God have done it, friends, and that's why they got up. Why, notice how James puts it. It's plain enough:

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" James 4:10.

What about it? Shall we do it? Humble yourself. Don't wait for God to humble you. Don't wait for circumstances to humble you. That's a poor way to do it, friends. That's terrible.

You see, that was the trouble with Peter. God tried to help Peter. The Savior spoke to him and said, "Peter, you had better pray." "What about?"

"Why, we're going into a terrible situation and you're going to deny Me, and all of you are going to run away."

"Oh, no, Lord. I wouldn't do that for anything. Maybe once I would have done it, but no more. Why, Jesus, don't you know that I'm converted? Don't You know You ordained me? Why, I'm an apostle. I'm one of the pillars of the church. Oh, no, I wouldn't do that. I'm way past anything like that."

"Peter, you do not know yourself. You need to go into the garden and get down there with Jesus and earnestly entreat for a view of yourself, and then a view of victory in Christ."

And they come in that order. They never come in any other order. Before the mountain comes the valley. Before the up comes the down. And mark you, because Peter would not go voluntarily, because Jesus asked him to and urged him to, he had to go some other way. He had to fall in, because he wouldn't go in by himself. And he had to go in before everybody when he could have had it in private, alone with God.

Don't misunderstand me, I don't mean that Peter would have failed. I mean just the opposite. He wouldn't have failed. This thing of going down I'm talking about is not a matter of failure. It's a matter of seeing the thing which makes the failure. That's our natural weakness and our natural disposition.

Peter found it out when he got in there in the courtroom. Somebody came along and said, "Oh, you were with Jesus, weren't you." And he began to curse and

swear, and denied that he knew the Lord. Then Peter began to find out that Jesus knew all the time that he needed a new conversion. Peter found it out by failure when he could have found it out by prayer. May I repeat that? Peter found it out by failure, when he could have found it out by prayer. He found it out by the examination of the Devil when he could have discovered it by self-examination. The place to conduct self-examination is alone with God.

I'm persuaded, dear friends, that there are thousands of Christians that have very little idea what prayer is for. They suppose that prayer is a time to rattle off a list of Santa Claus requests. "Lord, give me this and give me that, and give me something else. Lord, do this and do that."

It's all right to ask God to give us things, but the great purpose of God in getting us to come to Him, even to ask for things, is this: He hopes that while we're in there, in the closet with Him, He can tell us some things that we very much need to know about ourselves. Of course, if we run in and rattle off our Christmas shopping list and then run out, He doesn't get much chance, and the great purpose of prayer is defeated.

To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken:

"...Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" Luke 22:31-32.

Now, I know there're some people who say, "Yes, but that's the trouble. Peter wasn't converted. But, He got converted, and after the Day of Pentecost he never had any more trouble with anything like that."

Let me tell you something, friends. The reason Peter never cursed and swore and denied the Lord from then on was because he learned this lesson. He learned to sense his need and weakness and to be very humble about Peter. Even then he had to have some help at times. We're told there were times when Peter was just about to do something that wouldn't have been the best, and John was right there to touch him on the shoulder and say, "Be careful, Peter, be careful." And because Peter had learned how weak and wicked his natural heart was, he took the caution right away. And a prayer went winging to God, and he was kept.

Oh, friends, I'm so glad that we can learn the lesson, aren't you? I pray that we *will* learn the lesson. See how Peter puts it here? Peter knew what he was talking about:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" 1 Peter 5:6.

In due time. How long? Five minutes? Ten minutes? Thirty minutes? Why, however long it takes. But I want to tell you something, friends. If we're afraid to go to the bottom, if we don't go very far down, we'll never go very far up.

I want you to look at that little diagram on the black board. Do you notice this? It keeps getting deeper and higher, deeper and higher, deeper and higher—A series of downs and ups, and downs and ups. And what do I mean by that? I'll read it for you in *Steps to Christ*:

"There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God. Yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes. But we are not to be discouraged" *Steps to Christ*, page 64.

"Oh, but I don't want it that way. I don't want to have to do anything like that. I just want to be singing all the time. And I just think that some way there ought to be some kind of religion."

Yes, there is, friends, there's that kind of religion. It's furnished by the Devil, and you don't want it.

"The true religion of Jesus Christ will not lead you to self-exaltation. It will lead you not to have confidence in the flesh" *Ibid*.

"We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus" *Ibid*.

Why? Because we're naturally weak and sinful.

Don't misunderstand me. This does not say that we have to go on sinning, sinning, sinning. It tells us how to keep from going on sinning, sinning, sinning. The answer is not in an elation that lifts us above all temptation. It's in a weeping at the feet of Jesus that reveals to us our great need, and leads us to cry for the great help that the great Savior has to offer. That is it.

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes" *Ibid*.

That's what I mean by this down curve that leads to a higher up curve. The closer you come to God's glorious ideal, the weaker and more faulty you will appear in your own eyes. And it isn't because your eyes are out of focus, either. It's because they're getting in better focus all the while. It isn't because you're getting worse. You were that way all the time. But you couldn't stand to see how bad you were at first; you would have been utterly discouraged. That's right. God didn't tell you all about it at first. You'd have never had any faith to even lift up your eyes. You'd have said, "Oh, my, if I'm that bad, I'm hopeless."

Didn't Peter feel that way for awhile after his failure? Did you ever feel that way? David must have felt that way for awhile, after conviction came to him. But I want to tell you something, friends, we are worse than that. We are weaker than that. There's not a one of us here tonight, that knows how weak and helpless and hopeless we are. We've just had a little glimpse. That's all.

"Ah," you say, "that's so discouraging."

If you stop there, it is. But you don't have to stop there. Paul didn't stop there. He didn't stop saying:

"...I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing" Romans 7:18.

He didn't stop there. He rose to the place where he said:

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

But he did it through Christ. By self-repudiation and laying hold of the righteousness of Christ, he rose to those heights.

Why, look at the prophet Elijah. Alone he stands there for God at Mt. Carmel. He cries and the fire falls. The prophets of Baal are taken and slain. God wins a great victory, and all Israel are on their faces in recognition of God's sovereignty. One man has won the victory for God.

What does Elijah do? Ah, friends, as those people go their ways all with the names of God and Elijah on their lips, what does Elijah do? He goes up there to the top of Mt. Carmel and gets down on his knees. He puts his face down there between his knees, on the ground, in abject humility.

What does he do? Oh, he prays to God. He examines his heart. He looks back over his life. He sees his natural weakness. He acknowledges his imperfection. We are told, my friends, that as he did that time after time. How many times did he pray that evening on Carmel? 7 times. You know what that number stands for? He had to keep praying and going over his life in self-examination until, we're told, in his own eyes he grew less and less and less.

But oh, there was something else. As he clung to the righteousness that God offered to him as a free gift, the answer came. The servant came back and said, "There's a little cloud yonder out there in the west, just the size of a man's hand."

Elijah said, "That's it. It's going to rain and rain hard." It hadn't rained for 3 ½ years, but Elijah knew. He had his answer. He'd gone to the bottom of the valley, friends.

And while this lesson of going to the bottom is so important, let me tell you that the rest of it is just as important. In every prayer experience, we should not only go to the bottom of self-examination and self-repudiation, with it, my friends, we

should rise by faith to the heights of claiming the righteousness of God as a free gift, imputed to us for every sin in the past, and imparted to us for every temptation in the future.

Oh, it's true, friends. It's true. We can have it, if we'll take the time.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" Romans 5:1-2.

And every day, as we go deeper into the valley of self-examination, better acquainted with our natural weakness, we can rise to the higher heights, the ever-increasing heights of victory in Jesus, over every temptation and every sin.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after flesh, but after the Spirit" Romans 8:1.

Oh, let us not fear the valley of humiliation, friends. And once we're in it, let's be willing to go down to the bottom and see how weak and worthless we are. Let us confess it and cry to God about it. And then let's not stop there. Let us, by faith, see the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us. And by faith before we leave that place of prayer, let us say, "Dear Lord, I see 2 things. I see what I am, and I see what You are." And by faith, the transfer is made.

I repeat, let us see 2 things. Let us see what we are without Him, and let us see what we are with Him.

"...without me, ye can do nothing" John 15:5.

He says in John 15, but:

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

Ah, there it is, friends. You know, really, there's no half-way business about this. We're either with Him or without Him. And without Him we're the chief of sinners, and with Him we triumph over every temptation.

Now, in closing, I want you to look forward to the closing events of this world's history. The darkest hour is going to come just before the dawn. You, who've studied the coming events, know that just before the glorification of the saints comes the time of what? Jacob's trouble. That's what Jeremiah calls it, the time of Jacob's trouble.

What kind of experience is that going to be? Is that going to be a time when everybody is just going to be singing some of these popular religious melodies which are borrowed from the dance hall? Is that the way we're going to do? I don't think

so. The prophet Jeremiah saw it and says, “I see paleness on every face”—the time of Jacob’s trouble (See Jeremiah 30:6).

Do the people of God at that time have any sins to confess? No. *Great Controversy* says their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and they cannot bring them to remembrance. You remember that? Well, what on earth then, are they having such a time about? Ah, friends, if you don’t know, it would be a good thing to study the chapter in *Great Controversy* on the time of trouble. And it isn’t that the people of God are unwilling to be martyrs. That isn’t it. God is leading them through the final valley before the final mountaintop.

But now I want to come back a little before that. Do you remember that before they go into Jacob’s trouble they get what? They get the latter rain. They get the glorifying power of the Holy Spirit in that wonderful experience of the loud cry. And then they go down into this great gulf of Jacob’s trouble, and up to the glorification of translation.

What comes just before this latter rain, loud cry experience? No, no, not persecution. What comes before it? Do you remember this little chapter in *Early Writings* that tells about it? What’s the name of that chapter? The shaking. Listen while I read about it. See where you think it is:

“I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle” *Early Writings*, page 269.

Is this Jacob’s trouble I’m reading about? Oh, no. That’s after the close of probation, Jacob’s trouble is. This is before. It sounds like it, doesn’t it? It is like it. It isn’t quite so deep. It’s the trough before, you see.

Let me ask you something else. Do you think there’ll be some others before this one? Are you having any? What are you doing with them? Just lying there? God help us, friends, if we do. If we just lie there, we’ll never go any farther along. Oh, let us, as we come into experiences of difficulties, problems, temptations, recognize that they are God’s providence, signaling us that it’s time to go to the valley with Jesus. That’s what they are for.

In every difficulty, we’re to see a call to prayer. And prayer includes self-examination. But it includes more than weeping over our weakness and confessing our sins and our needs. It includes by faith climbing the heights of holiness and planting the banner of victory on the heights. And we’re not to leave our closets until we feel strong in God, by faith, ready to meet a lion, ready to meet the dragon with all his fangs bared, my friends.

It’s our privilege. The promises of God are yea and amen. Victory comes not by feeling that we are a match, but victory comes by knowing that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

Oh, I thank God for the simplicity of faith, my friends. I thank God tonight that every one of us, if any of us tonight is in the valley, right here in this meeting we can pray our way and claim our way through to the glorious victory, and we can go out of this chapel tonight, knowing that we're on the heights with God, that we have the victory. We're to see ourselves there as we are in our weakness, but we are to see ourselves vividly victors in Christ. We're to go from this meeting knowing: Thanks be to God which some day will give us the victory?

"Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Corinthians 15:57.

Oh, friends, I thank God for that, don't you? Let us kneel in prayer.

(Brother McGee prays)

We come in the name of the Savior to receive the experience that we have been studying about. We see that we're sinners and that we're weak—not only that we were weak, we are weak; not only that we were sinful by nature, we are sinful by nature. We confess it, Lord. We confess that in our hearts tonight are tendencies and trends that if they were allowed to manifest themselves would break Thy heart, grieve the angels and destroy all hope of heaven for every one of us. And Lord, we're so glad that we can repudiate these things and leave them at Thy dear feet tonight.

And now, we thank Thee that there is One hanging upon the tree, dying for us, that these things may be pardoned and cleansed. We thank Thee that there has been a fountain opened for the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. And we choose to plunge beneath that cleansing stream tonight. We thank Thee that by faith we can accept all this for us. We believe that tonight, Thou doest take our sins and give us Thy righteousness. We believe that tonight, not at some time in the future, but tonight, the blessed work is done. Oh, we thank Thee, our Lord. We thank Thee for this cleansing stream, for this healing flood, this pardoning grace, this victory through Jesus our Lord.

And we're accepting it, we're not going to stay down there in that trough, Lord. We know You didn't intend for us to. You've only let us get down here to see what manner of men we are. But oh, Jesus, we thank Thee for the free gift in Thy name. We thank Thee for victory and deliverance. We accept it and we praise Thy name for it. Amen.

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