

Spiritual Superhighway

#0733

Study given by W.D. Frazee—1960

There is something God is ready to do as soon as we have done what He has left for us to do.

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” Isaiah 40:3-5.

In ancient times it was customary, when the king was about to visit distant parts of his dominion, for word to be sent ahead. Men got out and repaired and fixed up the highways. That is what our text is talking about.

In getting ready for the triumphant entry of a king it was necessary for the crooked places of the road to be straightened out, the rough places to be smoothed out. It was also necessary for a work of leveling to be done. Every valley exalted, and every valley and hill be made low.

We are in the superhighway age. The federal government, uniting with the states, is now spending billions of dollars to make a vast network of superhighways in which you can go from state to state and from one side of the country to the other without passing a single red light.

We know something about it. Some day there will be a stream of cars like ants passing between us and that mountain yonder. I was quite interested in talking with one of the engineers working on these projects. He tells me that before they ever bring a bulldozer, or one of these great earthmovers, or any blasting equipment, they have worked out all the elevations, the hills and valleys. They have it all planned. They know exactly how many cubic yards of earth they are going to have to move here in order to fill up a valley there. They have it all figured out.

That is a wonderful thing, of course. Human research and engineers, and all the modern mechanical equipment, are being brought to bear on solving the traffic problem. But that is not my subject. Spiritual superhighways is what I want you to think about this first day of the new year, 1960. God is in the business of building a great superhighway. “Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway.”

It is right up to the minute. A highway for our God. Not for Eisenhower or some other world figure. God is coming, and He wants the highway prepared. He has given you and me the privilege of being the workmen who are to accomplish that job. Shall we accept the assignment? What do you say?

You had just as well recognize there are going to be mountains that have to be moved. That is what this suggests. And there are going to be valleys that have to be filled up, and crooked places that have to be straightened out, and rough places that need to be made plain. Will you work on jobs like that? That is what God is calling for.

The superhighways they are making now are planned in such a way that you can drive along at most any reasonable speed, and there is never a time when the curve is such that you cannot see around it. There is never a time that the level is such that you cannot see what is ahead. As far as you can see there is the road. If it turns, it turns so gradually there is no danger of not seeing where your car is going.

In this spiritual superhighway you and I are building, under the supervision and command of God, every rough place is to be made smooth and plain, every crooked piece is to be straightened out, every valley is to be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low. What is it talking about anyway?

I will tell you. It is talking about character development. As you and I are born into this world, we are far from being balanced. We do not receive through our heredity a balanced character.

Character has to be developed anyway, of course. If Cain and Able had been born in Eden instead of outside the garden they would still have had to develop character. They would have had in Eden perfectly balanced minds in every way to start with. But we are down here after six thousand years of degeneracy, and the human race is far from balanced.

As you and I come to the place where we begin to have something to do with developing our own characters, if we have any understanding of God's perfect ideal, we soon discover that we have some points that are strong and some that are weak. Some stand up like mountains, and in some the very absence is like a great valley. What are we going to do with those characteristics?

There are some people in the world who have so little idea of what we are studying that they think it is something to boast about to have some great outstanding characteristics that other people have to put up with. No. God wants the spiritual bulldozer to get in there.

If it is some characteristic you have been proud of, it isn't easy to have it leveled off. You are liable to think that something very valuable and important is being taken out of your life, when the truth is that God is trying to make ready the highway for His glorious appearance. Friends, let us be willing to be leveled out and leveled off. What do you say? And that involves building up our weak characters.

When Luke quotes this verse I have just read in Isaiah, he puts it, "every valley shall be filled" Luke 3:5. That is the thing you do with a valley. When it comes to highway building you fill it. Sometimes it takes a great many tons of material to fill a valley. Tons and tons.

What about the valleys in your character? What about the weak points in your character? Are you going to build those up, or allow them to stay? Are you going to say? Well, it is just too bad, but if there is any highway along here it is just going to have to follow the dips of my mind. Up and down and round and round.

No friends, that will never do for the 144,000. Each one of those is going to have a gloriously balanced character. Every valley will be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low. If we are willing, God is going to lead us through experiences in 1960 that will level out these characteristics in our minds and dispositions. He is going to give us experiences that will abase the pride of man and lift up our weak points.

Let's let Him do it. And if you will let Him, every experience that will come to you this year will be deliberately planned by God to accomplish this very thing. That is what these experiences are for. It is earth moving equipment at work trying to level out these dominating things that are in our lives, and trying to fill up the weaknesses in our lives. I repeat, let's let Him do it.

This work ought to start right away with the children. Parents are to make a study of their children's characteristics. Some parents do. And I am sorry to say, if some parents find some strong point in the child, it is the thing they develop, the thing they work on. If a child has some wonderful gift, or something they think is a wonderful gift, then they want to pour a lot of time and money into developing that strong point in the child. What for? To show it off. I suppose to show what wonderful parents the child has.

But that is not the way to get a highway ready for God in that child's life.
Listen:

"There are few well balanced minds, because parents are wickedly negligent of their duty to stimulate weak traits and repress wrong ones. They do not remember that they are under the most solemn obligation to watch the tendencies of each child, that it is their duty to train their children to right habits and right ways of thinking.

"Children must have constant care, but you need not let them see that you are ever guarding them. Learn the disposition of each as revealed in their association with one another, and then seek to correct their faults by encouraging opposite traits" *Child Guidance*, page 206.

Do what with the weak traits? Stimulate them. So parents, study your child. When you see it has some strong point, perhaps instead of stimulating it, what it needs is pruning. Give some attention to the weak points.

Speaking of showing off our children, the greatest and most wonderful child who ever lived in this world spent thirty years in a little obscure Galilean village, and through all that time He never did anything spectacular. His name was never on the front page of either the newspaper or the church paper. He was content to do humble things in a humble way, and to develop gradually, symmetrically that wonderfully balanced character.

“The faculties of the mind need cultivation that they may be exercised to the glory of God. Careful attention should be given to the culture of the intellect, that the various organs of the mind may have equal strength, by being brought into exercise, each in its distinctive office. If parents allow their children to follow the bent of their own mind, their own inclination and pleasure, to the neglect of duty, their characters will be formed after this pattern, and they will not be competent for any responsible position in life”
Child Guidance, page 332.

Now watch this sentence:

“The desires and inclinations of the young should be restrained, their weak points of character strengthened, and their over-strong tendencies repressed” *Ibid*.

There you have it. It isn't just wickedness that needs repressed. Wickedness needs more than repression. It needs suppression. It needs not merely to be pruned, it needs to be cut out; the axe laid to the root of the tree.

Beside this most important work of cutting out and killing out the sinful tendencies, there are over-strong tendencies that need to be repressed. Along with it there are weak points of character that need strengthening.

In the words of our text, every valley shall be exalted, filled, brought up to level, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, brought down to level. And thus a highway for our God is to be prepared. Oh, when that highway is completed, the glory of the Lord is going to be revealed. We will be ready for the thrilling scenes of the loud cry in which Jesus, through His people, will once more walk this world and carry on His wonderful, miraculous program. I want a part in it, don't you? Let's get the highway finished.

“The characters of many who profess Godliness are imperfect and one-sighted. Some who have learned to imitate Christ in meekness do not show His diligence in doing good” *Gospel Workers*, page 144.

Here are some people who are very meek and humble. If you would strike them on one cheek they would turn without a murmur. You could walk all over them and they would not do anything about it. But they are not very active.

I read something on a church sign one day as I drove along the road, and I have never forgotten it. It said, "Hell is for two classes of people—those who will do anything and those who will not do anything."

All the people who are lost will not be people who have done wicked things. This says some have learned to imitate Christ in meekness, but they do not show His diligence in doing good. What do they need to do with that weak point? Bring it up. Get active. Be zealous as well as meek. Be energetic as well as humble.

Others are active and zealous, but they are boastful. They have never learned humility. What is the matter with them? There is a big mountain there. What needs to happen? One of these great bulldozers and earthmovers needs to come right in and level it out.

Does the boastful, active worker appreciate that? Not as a rule. And one of the hardest jobs God has is humbling the pride of earnest, energetic workers. But God will do it if we will let Him.

We ought to be down on our knees humbling ourselves. Some pray to God to humble them, but if they understood, they would be humbling themselves. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low.

Others are active and zealous, but they are boastful. They have never learned humility. Still others leave Christ out of their work. They may be pleasing in their manners, they may show sympathy for their fellow men, but their hearts are not centered on the Savior, and they have not learned the language of heaven.

Oh friends, what a tremendous valley. What a great, gaping canyon in our lives if we leave Christ out of our work. Oh, what a great fill needs to be made.

Others are plastic and yielding, bending this way and that to please their fellow men. You could never build a highway on that sort of program, could you? No.

I have found a statement I think is most encouraging. It is one of the most encouraging I have ever read. It is talking about ministers, and it says they are in danger of losing their own souls:

"If they would watch, they would become acquainted with their weak points, where they are most likely to be assailed by temptation. With watchfulness and prayer their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter temptation without being overcome"
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 2, page 511.

Do you have a weak point? Has that weak point given you difficulty again and again? Probably. But with watchfulness and prayer God says those weak points can become your strongest points. I say that is encouraging. Wonderfully encouraging. Praise God for that great promise.

I thank God that what Isaiah wrote three thousand years ago will soon come to pass in the lives of God's people. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

In *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 57, we are told that wisdom will lead us to give special attention to the development of the weaker traits. So what are you going to concentrate on this year? God wants you to concentrate on the weak points, not on the strong points. What He wants you to do about the strong points is prune them. Tone them down. What He wants you to do about the weak points is study how to build them up.

In order that this may be so, we need a personal interview with the Master every day. He is the only one who knows us as we really are. And it is good sometimes to get counsel of friends who are willing to be critical; who love you enough to tell you the truth.

In that wonderful book, *Historical Sketches*, Sister White, in speaking to our workers in Europe, told them of the experiences of the 1844 movement when they expected the Lord to come in just a few days. She said that when they met together in seasons of prayer and devotion, sometimes they would say to one another, "Brethren, have you seen anything wrong in me?"

They were so anxious to be ready for Jesus to come. They expected Him right away. So it is a good thing to take counsel with those who will love us enough, and be frank enough, to point out our faults; to point out what our over-strong tendencies and weaknesses are so those may be built up. But first of all, and most of all, we need those personal interviews with our Lord.

As they approached Gethsemane the last night before the cross, Jesus told His disciples that all of them were going to be offended because of Him that night. What was Jesus seeking to do? He was seeking to help those men to see themselves as He saw them. But all the disciples said no. They said they would never be offended and never leave Jesus. He kept speaking to them and telling them that serious trouble was ahead, and they would be tried.

The most eloquent and most boastful in expressing his loyalty was Peter. He even said that if all the brethren would forsake Jesus, he would not. What was the matter with Peter? He didn't know himself.

He had some strong points and some weak points. He was very strong in defending the Master. We are told that Peter would have made a very valiant soldier, and would have been willing to lay down his life if he could have fought for Jesus. Did he prove that? Yes. Did Jesus commend him for that? No. Jesus reproved him.

That was a mountain in Peter's character, and it needed to be brought low. His weak point was that he was afraid of ridicule. It was brought to light that night.

After the disappointment of the trial and the terrible experience of the denial, as Peter heard the cock crow he happened to look in the direction where Christ was standing, and saw the face of Jesus turned toward him. As he read the love and pity in that face, he knew Jesus was doing just what Jesus said He had done. Jesus was praying for him. He remembered the words uttered just a few hours before:

“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.

He remembered how he had slept when Jesus was praying. He went out to Gethsemane and some earth moving took place. In bitter anguish Peter ran and stumbled all the way to the olive trees. There, in the very place where Jesus had poured out His life in prayer, Peter wept bitterly. He got a view of himself such as he might have had gotten alone with Christ in prayer a few hours before.

Thank God, some mountains were leveled and some valleys were filled. All the rest of Peter's life, he watched those points.

We are told that all he needed was a gentle word of caution from John. He didn't get upset when John laid his hand on Peter's shoulder and said, Peter, be careful. He didn't say, Well John, I guess I can take care of myself. No. Neither did he say, John, can't you forget that? It happened years ago. Do you have to keep bringing up my failings to me? No. He was glad for the cautions. He knew he needed them.

A humbled Peter became the vessel filled with the Spirit of God through which heaven spoke at Pentecost, and three thousand souls came forward to accept Christ and be baptized into the Apostolic church. Wasn't it a glorious experience?

So mightily God can work when men submit to the leveling process. And remember, leveling isn't just abasing pride. It is filling up the valleys. Oh, that we might realize our holding back is as full of sin as doing some wicked thing.

We are told there are some who love ease and shy away from bearing responsibility. The Spirit of God calls that attitude an idol. It is like worshiping Molech or Baal; holding back from doing the thing that needs to be done.

Ah, God is looking for men who are humble enough to do what He says. Humble enough to take the sling and five stones, and meet the giant instead of drawing away. Humble enough to follow Jesus, and, with Him, meet every problem, knowing there is an answer and a solution.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every valley and hill shall be made low. What is the cost of this superhighway system out here? About ten billion are being poured into building the system of superhighways over the nation.

But this we are dealing with tonight is of infinite cost. It has cost heaven long ages of sorrow. The Son of God has been sacrificed to fill up the hollows and pull down the mountains. The Son of God has given His life, and all heaven has been drawn into the work, and harnessed to the task. If you and I will be willing to join forces with our unseen heavenly alliance, this work can be quickly done and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

As we sit here this new year's day in meditation on these themes, I am sure there are many of you who are longing to express your determination to go at this work in 1960, and you are going to pray that God will help you understand the strong points in your character so they can be restrained, and the weak points so they can be built up.

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