

Faith, Works, and Sacrifice Precede Miracles

#0607

Study given by W. D. Frazee—October 14, 1975

Suppose you were passing along the road each day where a big factory was in operation, and should see a sign up there on the front gate “Men Wanted.” Every day you go by there you see that sign “Men Wanted.” Suppose some day we go by there and the sign is down. What do we know? They either ran out of work or they ran out of money. Right?

God has not run out of work and He has not run out of money. The text we’ll begin with this evening is John the ninth chapter and the fourth verse, the words of Jesus.

What are the first three words?

“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” John 9:4.

And so from that we get that song, Work for the night is coming. Notice the sense of urgency. “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.” He had this even in His childhood and youth—this sense of urgency. “I *must* be about My Father’s business” (Luke 2:49) He said when He was twelve years old.

“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work” John 4:34.

He was not only busy working, He wanted to get it done. He wanted to finish it. If this sense of urgency was fitting over nineteen hundred years ago, what shall we say now? Is it really true, friends, that we are in the sunset hour? Yes. Jesus is about to come. Anything we do will have to be done very quickly.

Now, you remember I studied with you a triangle (Sermon #0885, To Everyman His Work). Three different ways in which God calls and supports His workers. We found that there is a type of worker, or class of workers, that is called by the Conference and paid by the Conference. And the Conference uses the tithes and the offerings that God’s people turn into the treasury of the church to support those workers. Is this God’s plan? Yes. Both in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy this is the great plan for the support of the ministry and associated workers.

And we found that God has a whole army of laymen that not only earn the money with which to support themselves, they earn the money to pay the tithes and offerings that support the workers that are employed by the church. And besides that, in missionary lines, each one of them has a special mission to reach certain

souls in a personal way. It may be in giving Bible studies, holding cottage meetings, and occasionally, we see a lay preacher among our laymen that are spending their time earning a living. But *all* the members of the church in one way or another, by writing letters or by visiting their neighbors, by Gospel visiting or other phases of soul winning work, have a part with Jesus. Is every Christian to have a part in the Lord's work? [Answer from congregation: Yes!] That's right.

You remember we found that there is a third class of workers—workers who are called to devote their time primarily *not* to making a living, but to working for souls. And yet, they are not called by the church, they are not employed by the church, they are not paid by the church. How then are they sustained? What makes it possible for them to spend their time in this way? Let me say, dear friends, it's miracles that make that possible. Miracles. And without miracles this program would be impossible. What makes miracles possible? That's what I want to study with you tonight.

First, let me review with you that matchless statement in *Medical Ministry*, page 75. Speaking of God's call, here at Loma Linda Sister White said:

“We should have a school conducted on the principles of the ancient schools of the prophets. It may not be carried on in every respect as are the schools of the world, but it is to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives, not to commercial pursuits, but to unselfish service for the Master” *Medical Ministry*, page 75.

Now notice, and this was given nearly seventy years ago, a school was to be established there on that beautiful hill for the training of Gospel medical missionary workers. And it was “to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives.” Each word there needs to be chewed on. They desire it, they're not forced to. They want to. Instead of someone having to beg them, they begged for the chance.

Somebody was telling me the other day, “I feel it's a great privilege to be here at Wildwood.” I said, “I do too.” God has been good to me, let me be here quite a while. But, my dear friends, if it is not a privilege for you to be here in this program, if it is not an honor, a special opportunity, then one of two things; either God never called you here, or else you don't know what it's all about.

God hasn't called everybody here. As I sometimes say, If God had wanted everybody at Wildwood, He would have made it a bigger place. Have you ever stopped to think you are one in a million people? You are. For every one of you that is here there are a million people that aren't here.

Why did God pick you out and put you here? This place is to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives not to commercial pursuits, but to unselfish service for the Master. What does devote mean? To dedicate. To consecrate. Turn over your life.

Suppose you were going to witness for Christ, and you knew it meant to die by being burned at the stake or being shot by a firing squad. That would be quite a sacrifice, wouldn't it? Yes.

Sometimes it is a greater sacrifice to devote the life in service. Every day, day after day, say, Lord, my life is on the altar to be consumed in service.

“I beech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you devote your bodies a living sacrifice” Romans 12:1.

This school is to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives. How long is that? Well, I don't know. You don't know. Some of us know a dear friend whose funeral we participated in a few days ago. He was cut down in the prime of life, but thank God he was working for Jesus. So whether our stay on this planet be shorter or longer, if our lives are on the alter we are in this class.

Is it a sin to make money? No. Does God give some people the ability to get wealth? Yes (Deuteronomy 8:18). Somebody says, I wish He would give me some. Well, you can ask Him if you want to. But if you do, be sure to ask Him to send along in the same package good sense to know what to do with it when you get it. There is not a faster trip to hell than a bag of money with no brains. But there are some people God has not called to make money. They do not desire to devote their lives to commercial pursuits.

What does pursuit mean? Running after something. The Declaration of Independence says that every person has among his rights the pursuit of happiness. Some people think the government guarantees everybody to get happiness. No. It only guarantees everyone to have the chance to run after it. They are running fast these days. Very few are catching it.

So it is with this thing of commercial pursuits. There are millions of people in pursuits that about all they get by the way of money is enough to pay their installments and taxes, and borrow some till next payday. With millions of people it matters little whether their income is in hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands. They still go through the same program. I heard one of our denominational financial men say that in order to know what the average family needs, take their income and add ten percent.

Commercial pursuits does not necessarily involve making people rich, but it does mean that people are trying to get money. And don't forget, that isn't wicked if it is done honestly. I am saying there are some people who do not desire to devote their lives to commercial pursuits. Whatever happened to them? What is it they want to do instead of that? They want to do unselfish service for the Master.

Someone says, Yes, but we have to live. We have to make a living.

I will read how Jesus met this problem:

“When Christ called His disciples to follow Him, He offered them no flattering prospects in this life. He gave them no promise of gain or worldly honor, nor did they make any stipulation as to what they should receive”
Ministry of Healing, page 479.

What is stipulation? It is spelling out what I am going to get. Christ gave His disciples no promise as to what they should receive, and they made no stipulation. Well, wasn't that foolish? Jesus didn't think so, and the disciples who accepted it didn't think so. What a strange way of thinking to the world. In fact, this whole program is incomprehensible to nine people out of ten, and to many in the church. They don't see how it adds up. Well, it doesn't. It multiplies. I mean that. It has to.

To Matthew, as he sat at the receipt of custom, the Savior said, “Follow Me.” What does it mean that he sat at the feet of custom? He was in the government office. He was a tax collector. He was well off by the standards of his time. And Jesus had the audacity to go up there to that man in government service and invite him to leave that remunerative tax collecting and not even suggest what he was going to get.

Jesus had that audacity. He didn't beg him. He didn't flatter him. He invited him. And Matthew thought it was such an honor to be invited to go with Jesus that he gave a party to all his friends and comrades in government service. He told them that Jesus was the guest of honor. Wasn't that something? If you were leaving a job that was paying you well and stepping out into a program that didn't offer you anything, would you have a party to celebrate it?

“To Matthew as he sat at the receipt of custom, the Saviour said, `Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.” *Ibid.*

He left all. He didn't say, Jesus, I will make a deal with you. I will continue this government service and I will spend my evenings with you. Would that have been wrong? No. But he couldn't have spent so much time with Jesus that way. In his particular case, Christ tapped him on the shoulder and invited him to leave the assured methods of support, and step out into something where there was nothing to count on except the promise of God.

“Matthew did not, before rendering service, wait to demand a certain salary, equal to the amount received in his former occupation. Without question or hesitation he followed Jesus. It was enough for him that he was to be with the Saviour, that he might hear His words and unite with Him in His work” *Ibid.*, page 479, 480.

Dear ones, there are at least two classes of people here tonight. One class already knows this philosophy. And it is easy if you already know the philosophy we are studying to sit back and enjoy it and not be on your toes to get it. Let me tell you, we are in the seven years of plenty. You had better do what Joseph did and store up

the corn in storehouses. The famine is coming. You are going to need every reference I am giving you. You are going to need every fact and principle I am giving you. You are going to need it for two great reasons: To teach others and be an anchor to your own souls.

There are others who are listening tonight to whom this idea is quite new. It may be strange. I beg you, write down the references. Study these things alone with God on your knees. Get them deep in your souls. If you don't, it will only be a matter of time until the tide that brought you in will carry you out.

Oh, I want you to be riveted to the Rock, and the Rock is the Word of Christ. The Rock is the call of Christ, the commission of Jesus. You must know that God has called you, and called you to this work.

It is not a matter of knowing that you are going to get a certain wage from the church or from some certain employment. No. It is a matter of a special call from Jesus to you without promise of remuneration. To those who see it, this is the glory of it. I want you to see the glory of it, for if you don't you will not be with it long.

“So it was with the disciples previously called. When Jesus bade Peter and his companions follow Him, immediately they left their boats and nets” *Ibid.*

Peter didn't say, Well Lord, I will tell you what I will do. We will try to phase out this business, and maybe two or three years from now I will be able to spend some time with you.

“Some of these disciples had friends dependent on them for support. But when they received the Saviour's invitation, they did not hesitate, and inquire, ‘How shall I live, and sustain my family?’ They were obedient to the call; and when afterward Jesus asked them, ‘When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?’ they could answer, ‘Nothing’” *Ibid.*

Every now and again someone asks me about coming to Wildwood. To be factual, I have to tell them, among other things, that there isn't any room at Wildwood. There are more houses than rooms for people who want to come. But I tell them I am saying this not to discourage them, because anything that God want's done can get done. If He doesn't want it done, we don't want it anyway, do we?

That's the beautiful thing about self-supporting work. It knows no impossibilities. It does not measure things in human scales merely. It has its feet on the ground. It has to. There is nothing else to hold it up. But it has its head in the clouds with Jesus. And He has said, “All power is given unto me. Go and I am with you.”

After telling about Matthew and Peter and the others, it says:

“Today the Saviour calls us, as He called Matthew and John and Peter, to His work” *Ibid.*, page 480.

What is Jesus doing today? He is calling people like He did back there. Do you believe that? He is calling some people to be carpenters and plumbers and bookkeepers and managers in business, and to do various things to make a living and support the church. He is calling some people to spend their lives in the ministry of the church and receive the appropriate support through the channels God has ordained. But He is calling some people like He called John and Peter and Matthew. He is calling some people to step out of the boat of assured support, whether from the church or from business, and to step out onto the water of insecurity as far as every human appearance is concerned.

I say, dear friends, if you are stepping out of the boat onto the water, you had better be sure of two things. You had better be sure it is God that is inviting you out of the boat onto the water, and you had better be sure you keep your eyes on Jesus. If it isn't Jesus that calls you, what is going to happen to you? You are going to sink. And even if it is Jesus who calls you and you don't keep your eyes on Him, you are going to sink. Who demonstrated that? Peter, the very one God invited.

Sometimes the question comes, Does everyone who goes into self-supporting work succeed? Not a bit of it. I could add that I don't know of anything else in life that everyone succeeds in. Do you? But that isn't the point. The point is that there are many failures in this kind of work because people either don't understand, or they lose the vision. We are stepping out as we go into this work. If we know what we are doing, we are stepping out into a program that requires miracles.

I want to bring you three things that are necessary for miracles. By the way, who works miracles? God works miracles. The Devil can too, but we are not interested in that kind. We are interested in miracles God works for workers who step out in obedience to His command.

Faith is the base. Then there is work. Following faith and work is sacrifice. It takes all three. You can't leave out one.

It is just like when you have a recipe, you know. It takes flour and water and yeast to make bread. If it is all water it isn't bread. If it is all flour it isn't bread. If it is all yeast it isn't bread. But flour and water and yeast can make bread.

When an individual has been called by God to this program, he puts his heart into faith and work and sacrifice. These three things put together and working together makes it possible for God to work miracles, and He does it over and over again. I want you to look at those three things and I want to make some observations about them.

James tells us in James 2:20 that faith without works is dead. You know why it is dead? It is not real faith.

As a friend of mine says, "Real faith is so good it works."

And it does.

So the person in self-supporting work who simply says, I have faith and I will pray, but doesn't work, he is a contradiction. If I have faith enough that something ought to be done that I pray to God for it, I ought to have faith enough to work to bring it to pass.

Faith without work and sacrifice is presumption, but sacrifice without faith and work is folly. To live a life of poverty for poverty's sake, or for any reason other than the call of God, is plain folly. There is no virtue in being without money or without food or without resources. The person who sacrifices without faith in God and without working diligently to bring about the purpose desired is foolish.

On the other hand, working without faith and sacrifice is selfishness. There are plenty of people who are working and working hard, but they are working for themselves. They are working without faith in God, without the call of God, and they don't sacrifice. So any of these arms of the triangle is futile and inadequate by itself. But when you have faith that prays and lays hold of the arm of God, and works hard, and you have a love for God and a love for your fellow men that takes what you have and uses it in sacrifice to help, this opens the way for God to work miracles.

“Often the missions are carried on with no means in sight by men and women who from day to day beseech God to send them means with which to advance the work”
Gospel Workers, page 366.

This was written in the days when we had a number of city missions in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and other places. And while they were fostered by the Conference, they were largely expected to be self-supporting.

“Let not our people think that conducting city missions is an easy work, or one that brings financial profits. Often the missions are carried on with no means in sight by men and women who from day to day beseech God to send them means with which to advance the work” *Ibid.*

Is it wrong to have a budget? No. Our denomination works on budgets. Most businesses work on budgets, or their equivalent. Many homes work on a budget. Many more probably should. But here are some enterprises the Spirit of Prophecy is talking about that are carried on with no means in sight. Day by day workers beseech God to send them means with which to advance the work.

Over a hundred years ago George Muller of Bristol, England carried on a work like this. The Lord impressed him, and he started taking care of orphans. In answer to prayer the Lord caused literally millions of dollars to pass through that man's hands, but again and again he came literally to the end of his visible resources. More than once they had no means in sight. They were sometimes without food.

One day a bakery wagon broke down in front of the orphanage. The man gave the bread to Muller because he knew he couldn't get the wagon fixed in time to deliver it. Another time a milk truck had a similar experience. Hundreds of times people were impressed to send him means. On one occasion a man who had been

asleep was so impressed he had to get up and bring to Muller a certain amount of money that met a special need.

You say, If I could have an experience like that I think that would be wonderful. Which part is it you think would be wonderful? I tell you honestly, very few people would even get within sight of the wonderful part. They wouldn't allow themselves to get anywhere near that dangerous part.

And nobody should unless he knows God has called him to it. A man is a fool to venture into something like this without knowing that God is going to sustain him. He must be as confident as Peter was when he stepped out of the boat onto the water, but keep his eye on Jesus as Peter failed to do. Unless a person is going to do something like that, he is a fool to be in a work like this. He ought to be in something he can get his hands on, something he can see through. Stepping out on the promises of God is very well for those who have the call.

When the children of Israel got to the Red Sea, God told them to go forward.

“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land”
Hebrews 11:19.

How did they go through? By faith. “Which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.” What does assaying mean? Tried to do it. The Egyptians tried to do the same thing that Israel did. Israel got through by dry land, and the Egyptians got drowned doing the same thing. But Israel did it by faith, and the Egyptians did it by presumption.

Before you go out without visible means of support, you must know that the God who led Israel through the Red Sea is leading you. If you don't, you may get drowned. And in that last moment of conscientiousness you may say, Well, I was only doing what I saw someone else do. If you do it by presumption you will get drowned.

You can see that this is a call to prayer. Men can go out and run a business, and it is a good thing for them to pray, but there are millions of people making a success in business without prayer. They are living for this world, but they are making a success in what they are trying to do. You cannot make a true success of this kind of work without an experience with God, and therein lies one of its greatest values and greatest advantages.

“Everyone needs a practical experience in trusting God
for himself” *Gospel Workers*, page 418.

Are you having it? If you are going to deal with sick people in the future and you are trying to learn how now, what kind of people do you need to be around? Sick people. If you are going to be a cook in the future and you want to learn how to cook now, what do you need to be around? You need to be around food. If you want to learn gardening what do you need to be around? Soil and plants and weeds. If you are going to learn to solve the kind of problems we are studying about tonight, what do you need to be around? Problems.

Are there any within reach of you? Do you know any problems touching you?

Yes, Brother Frazee, and I just wonder when someone is going to do something about it?

God, in His mercy, will see to it that some problems touch you that nobody will get at to solve for you. That's right. There may be a problem in your own personal life, in the home where you live, the department where you labor, the church where you are serving. You are wondering when people are going to do something about it, but God is using it as a laboratory experiment to get you down on your knees and pray, and see if you are going to use first the arm of work or the arm of sacrifice, or both together to get the problem solved.

If God answers your prayer and works a miracle to solve that problem, He is going to do it in a way that will involve your participation, if it's nothing more than rolling the stone so Christ can shout, "Lazarus, come forth." Somewhere in it there will be an experience in which you will have to sacrifice something. You will have to sacrifice money, time, feelings, or your own opinion and your own way. Faith, work, and sacrifice. Then mighty miracles happen, and this is the way the work is going to be finished.

Do you want it finished? Oh folks, instead of praying for tasks equal to our powers, let's pray for powers equal to our tasks. Instead of looking all over this campus for a situation where we are without problems, let us see if we can't get enough grace to pray that God will help us solve the problems He sends. What do you say?

Who led in this? Jesus. Who called Matthew? Jesus. Who called Peter and John? Jesus. Who is calling men and women today? Jesus. Has He called you? Thank God. What an honor. What a privilege. And remember, everyone needs a practical experience in trusting God for himself.

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