

These Forty Years 1 of 2

#1006

Study given by W. D. Frazee—January 22, 1982

I was reading today that we should consider the Bible not merely as a letter written, but as the voice of God speaking to our hearts. I find the voice of Jesus speaking to my heart tonight.

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live” Deuteronomy 8:2,3.

It has been forty years since we came on these grounds. For forty years I have seen God at work on these hills and in these valleys, and now reaching out to the ends of the earth. To the glory of His name I recall some of those wonderful providence tonight. I thank God for the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. That's the only reason why we are here.

Before we came to Wildwood we had been a number of years in evangelism and pastoral work in the west and the deep south. In providence we had been led to associate with us groups of self-supporting helpers—doctors, nurses, colporteurs, health-food workers, Bible workers, and students in training to learn how to win souls. Why did we come here then to this little place? We came because we had found certain statements in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that the Lord impressed us to apply.

It is my privilege to tell you some of the experiences we have had in living by the Word of God. I would not suggest for a moment that any man or any group can carry out everything that is written. We can't all be everything, but everyone can be something. So I am glad we can make our contribution to the temple of God on earth.

Why did we come to this place, and for what purpose? The particular reference that led us here you will find in *Medical Ministry*. This had been called to our attention by Elder W. C. White in earlier years when we were in evangelistic work in the west. The particular statement calls for something near New York City. We are glad that our boy, Bill Dull, who was trained here at Wildwood, is now in process of carrying out this reference along with Larry Fleming in the restaurant work. Both of them are working from outpost centers.

“We need a sanitarium and a school in the vicinity of New York City. It is well to secure a place as a home for our mission workers outside of the city. Consider the advantages of locations among the hills with some land where fruit and vegetables might be raised for the benefit of the workers. Connected with it a small sanitarium. Such a home would be a welcome retreat for our workers where they may be away from the bustle and confusion of the city. The exercise called for in climbing hills is often a great benefit to our ministers, physicians, or other workers who are in danger of failing to take sufficient exercise. Let such homes be secured in the neighborhood of several cities, and earnest, determine efforts be put forth to give in these cities a warning message. Search for such properties in the rural districts, with easy access to the cities, suitable for small training schools for workers, and where facilities may also be provided for treating the sick and weary souls who know not the truth” *Medical Ministry*, page 308.

Here is a blueprint for an outpost center to be located near a city for the purpose of reaching the people of that city with the third angel's message. It is to be a home for missionary workers. It is to be a place where fruit and vegetables might be raised for their benefit. It suggests the advantages of hills for them to climb. It suggests that connected with it there should be a small sanitarium and a training school for workers. All of this is why we came here to find and carry out forty years ago. I praise God for His providence which has led us.

How much money did it take? When we came here we had just about enough money to pay for the truck that brought us up here, and food for a little while. But as far as paying for any building, that we had nothing. But we had faith in God.

We had two things that inspired us. One was the thought that if God wanted something done He would supply what was necessary. The other was if we wanted it enough to pray for it, God wanted us to work and sacrifice for it.

In *The Desire of Ages* is the check that we have cashed over and over again in the development of this work at Wildwood. We have read this particular statement and knelt down in prayer over and over again:

“The work of building up the kingdom of Christ will go forward, though to all appearance it moves slowly and impossibilities seem to testify against advance. The work is of God, and He will furnish means, and will send helpers, true, earnest disciples, whose hands also will be filled with food for the starving multitude” *The Desire of Ages*, page 370.

Anything God wants done can get done if God can find some people who can claim His promises and go to work to carry them out. If we will move forward in faith the Lord will do two things. He will furnish means and send helpers. All the lumber and money in the world doesn't mean a thing in putting up a building unless you have people who know how to drive nails, put in plumbing, do painting, and all the rest.

Over and over again we have seen God fulfil this promise. There were a group of between fifteen and twenty of us who started this work here. Some of them are now sleeping. Some of them are up on the hill in the little cemetery. Others are scattered out over the earth. But that was but a tiny little nest egg. The work had to be multiplied.

When we had to build the little sanitarium we had to excavate. We didn't have a bulldozer. We used mules and plows and picks and shovels. I had the privilege of working with a pick and shovel on the excavation there. And when we had the footing poured we had no one to put in the blocks for the foundation. We prayed for someone who knew masonry, and God sent us someone. We had to pray for a plumber, and God sent us someone. We had to pray for carpenters, and God sent us some. We had to pray for a painter, and God sent him.

Finally the roof was on. I am no builder, but in those days I could get upon top the roof and help. I remember one evening it looked like a rain was about to come along. We all got up there to finish the roofing. We got finished before the rain came.

But that was only the beginning. Building after building was built on these five hundred acres. And to the glory of God practically every building on this place has been put up by teachers and students working together.

Where did we get that idea? Well, we got it out of these inspired volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Dealing especially with teachers and students working together in agriculture, let me read a few things we read forty years ago that influenced our actions.

“Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, page 179.

I, who had spent much of my time for many years in city evangelistic work, learned to plow with a mule. For years we had no tractor here. All the work with the soil was done either by hand or else with a mule. I am so glad I learned how to plow with a mule. I have never learned how to run a tractor. Other men have come along and learned to do that. But I am so glad I had someone to teach me to work with the soil and also with the woods.

I have my little diary here. It records that on January 20, 1942 we arrived here. The next day we had a little business meeting with our workers. The item I

have down in my diary on that day was that Brother Frazee was asked to help in getting wood. You may be sure that was an item in the middle of the winter. So up there where the orchard is now were great woods. I had the privilege of helping to use a cross-cut saw. I learned how to use the saw and the axe, and what a joy it was to see those great trees come down, saw them up, and haul them in the wagon with the mule. Most of our places were heated with wood. One or two was heated with coal. Coal was cheap with mines nearby. But much of our heating was done with wood.

So whither working on the buildings, or the gardens, or the farm, or gathering wood, we all had plenty of exercise. But why did we come here? Just to get some physical exercise? No. We came here to continue with an evangelistic program. God had told us how to do this. And we were not dependent on our own thinking in this. Here is some instruction to Avandale:

“Let the teachers in our schools devote Sunday to missionary effort. Let them take the students with them to hold meetings for those who know not the truth. Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord. On this day house-to-house work can be done. Open-air meetings and cottage meetings can be held. Make these meetings intensely interesting. Sing genuine revival hymns, and speak with power and assurance of the Saviour's love. Speak on temperance and on true religious experience”
Counsels to Teachers, page 551.

We found a great blessing. Within a very short time of the day we landed here we were out up and down these valleys and hills, going in one direction and another, visiting people in their homes and their Sunday schools, and getting acquainted with them. We sowed the seed which has since blossomed and borne fruit. Today, as a result of our medical evangelistic work, we have a number of organized churches. Lookout Mountain, Jasper, New England, St. Elmo, Wallsville. And the latest one is in Fort Paine. Besides that we have our branches at Trenton, Tiftonia, and Stone Cave. So every Sabbath morning meetings are going on as a result of the work that has reached out in these forty years.

When I tell these different things that have happened I tell them to the glory of God. I wish much more had been accomplished. In fact, I wish we had been in the kingdom long ago. We had not intended being here in these hills for forty years when we came here. And praise God, I don't intend to stay around here another forty years. I am going home. But I thank God for what is happening.

I was telling you of the providence of workers being sent. But workers have to have nails to drive and lumber to drive them in. God has worked in many ways to supply the materials and the money to purchase them. Not one way. He has a thousand ways. I haven't kept track. I doubt if there has been a thousand ways yet, but it says He has a thousand more of which we know nothing. I want to give some of the promises that has cheered our hearts in this:

“The arm of omnipotence is outstretched to lead us onward and still onward. Go forward, the Lord says. I will send you help. It is for My name's glory that you ask, and you shall receive. Those who are watching for your failure shall yet see My word triumph gloriously. `All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive” *Gospel Workers*, page 263.

One of the reasons God leads us into a work of this kind is to learn in a practical way the beautiful balance between faith and works, avoiding presumption, and avoiding an unwillingness to venture out. When is a venture a venture of faith, and when is it presumption? This is a question you can never learn by reading a book. This is the great lesson of life.

Take the matter of debt. We could have rolled up debt after debt in those early years. But we had read in these books that we should avoid debt as we would leprosy or smallpox. We weren't about to want either leprosy or smallpox. The first six months we were here none of us got a nickel. I found that when July came we voted to pay ourselves five dollars apiece. Well, I could buy a few things like stamps and toothpaste. Of course, a dollar in those days was worth more than now. But for the first year we were here our stipends came to less than twenty dollars a year.

Why would we do that? We did that in order that we wouldn't go in debt. Another reason was because we didn't have the money. It is a wonderful thing when friends of the work will supply capital to put up a building. But when we began to use that for operating we are making a mistake. It is a wonderful thing for a group of workers to have in their hearts the work that God has called them to do, and that it is so important that they are going to do it no matter what it cost in sacrifice and work and in faith and prayer.

We found statements that encouraged us in that attitude.

“Those who are endeavoring to build up the work in new territory will often find themselves in great need of better facilities. Their work will seem to be hindered for lack of these facilities, but let them not lose their faith and courage. Often they are obliged to go to the limit of their resources” *Gospel Workers*, page 267.

The limit of resources is when you don't have anymore. If you have ten dollars and you go to the limit, you don't have any left. There are millions of people who wouldn't dare get into such a situation. They are not trained that way.

Moses was in that position for forty years. Every night he went to bed knowing that unless God worked a miracle the next morning he was going to have two million hungry people on his hands.

Our experiences are very small compared with Moses and Israel. But God deals with us in kindergarten ways.

We hadn't been here very many years when we had started to build one or two buildings. There were a couple of ladies who came and spent a couple of weeks here. I think they were friends of some workers.

The morning before these two ladies left one of them came to me and said, "Brother Frazee, I would like to see you."

We sat down in the White Cottage. She said, "Brother Frazee, I have enjoyed my two weeks here. I thought before I left I would like to do something for your work. I would like to help you get something. I would like to know what you need."

In my mind I thought this woman probably planned to get us a few pots and pans for the kitchen, or something like that. I was impressed to tell her of our program and what we envisioned here. I told her about the building we were planning to put up on the hill that we now call Haskell Hall. I told her what our program was in medical evangelism. I didn't mention any specific needs.

When I got through she said, "Well, I will write you out a check."

She handed it to me, and it was for one thousand dollars. Now I must tell you that was the only time I saw that particular thing happen. A thousand dollars in those days was something.

I learned afterward that woman was no millionaire. She had earned every bit of that thousand dollars by cooking and washing dishes. She was not related to any of us. The Lord had sent her here at that particular time.

When she handed me that check I said, "Sister, I think I owe you something. You have just done something the Lord has impressed your heart with. I think I owe you an explanation of why you have done it. Some of us have been meeting every day, praying for some specific needs that we didn't know how they were going to be met."

Do you think it brought joy to her heart? Yes, it did. The point was that it was just the day before that all that was needed we had to decide to pay one way or the other.

You say, That is wonderful. Yes, it is. Do you want to have an experience like that? Are you sure? "Often they are obliged to go to the limit of their resources." It is one thing to go to the limit of your resources, but it is another thing to go beyond your limit.

"At times it may seem that they could advance no further; but if they pray and work in faith, God will answer their petitions, sending them means for the advancement of the work. At times the future will look very dark; but let the workers bring to God the promises He has made, and thank Him for what He has done. Then the way will open before them, and they will be strengthened for the duty of the hour" *Ibid*.

We have seen it again and again. Sometimes in one way and sometimes in another. God does it in many ways to keep us looking to Him instead of looking to the channels.

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

I will tell you that there are many people who get ulcers on that kind of program. I am not sure that it is for everybody. I have never urged people to get into such a risky situation. In fact, sometimes I have told people about this program, and they thought they wanted to come. But I told them not to come if there is something else they could do.

The only people that ought to venture into this kind of program are those who know that God has called them to it. And when they do that, what happens to them is of little consequence. It is to the glory of God.

Jesus said He came down from heaven not to do His own will but His Father's will. He said He sought not His own glory but the glory of the One who sent Him.

To be utterly expendable, to put self on the altar, this is the program.

You and I are like all other human beings. We tend to get soft as time goes on if things are convenient and comfortable. But I think the Lord that the pioneer spirit still goes on. You and I can share it if we will. I praise God for all He has done through these forty years. He has sent workers whose hearts are touched and all willing and anxious to have a part in this work.

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