

Adding and Subtraction

Sermon #0728

Study given by W. D. Frazee

I invite you to turn to Psalm 144. What do we think of when you hear the number 144? We think of the 144,000 that God is sealing in preparation for His coming. What a wonderful company they will be. I trust that all here are striving with all their might to be among the 144,000. Well, I get some help with that from Psalm 144. We will use it as the basis of our meditation.

"Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" Psalm 144:1.

Is there a war on? Is God teaching people to fight? That is what this says. It is true that Jesus is the prince of peace. It is also true that there is a war on between peace and war. If we are on the side of peace, we will have to fight. We will have to fight the enemy of peace. That is the Devil, and the Devil has many agents. Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits, principalities and powers.

"My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and He in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me. LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away. Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children; Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood. I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto Thee. It is He that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword. Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood" Psalm 144:2-11.

Strange does not refer to odd or peculiar. It refers to foreign. We are told that King Solomon loved many strange women. They were women of Edom and Moab and Ammon and Egypt, and those other heathen countries. So David prays to be delivered from unconverted children, foreign to the ways of God. He prays to be delivered from those who do not know the language of Canaan, but who are expert

on all the slang of the day. Rid me, he says, and deliver me from the hand of strange children.

Notice there are two things about these children that perplex David. One is vanity, and the other is falsehood. I suppose that most of us agree that falsehood is pretty bad. There is a great deal of lying going on today in indirect ways. There is a great deal of pretense; a great deal of misrepresentation by pretending to be what one is not. Any such experience will not pass the experience that the hundred forty-four thousand must face. He whose name is truth, whose character is truth is of the truth. "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is written by the finger of the Almighty upon those tables of stone.

The only way to speak the truth is to be true in our innermost hearts. Mark it: If there is in our souls a desire to have people think something about us that is not so, that desire is liable to find expression in some form of misrepresentation.

We have been told by inspiration that many children are pious hypocrites. They may know how to recite glibly texts of Scripture. They may know how to speak in meetings. They may know how to go in for various contests in which they learn this and that, and get prizes and rewards for showing off their ability. Using the old proverb, they know which side their bread is buttered on, and they know that in the particular circle in which they move that to be religious means to get certain applause, certain patting on the back, certain appreciation. I am sure it was from such that David was praying to be delivered.

God wants children and youth to learn the Bible. He wants them to recite verses. He wants them to speak in meeting, but He does not want them to do it as pious hypocrites. He does not want them to do it to show off so they can get some kind of a badge or some other notice. All that is pride, vanity, and falsehood. It will not pass the test of the judgement.

God is honored and glorified when children and youth speak the praises of heaven from hearts that are full of appreciation of God with a sense of humility, knowing their own weakness, but happy that God has accepted them.

Notice David prays that he may be delivered not only from falsehood but from vanity. I wonder what the difference is? There are some things that are not lies that are still worthless. There are a multitude of things in this world that are streaming out through the public press, radio, and television, that nobody can say are falsehood, but certainly are vanity. They may be good, but they are good for nothing. That is one of the meanings of vanity. Vain. Worthless. Not worth what it cost.

We are told we are to turn away from a thousand topics that invite our attention. They are matters that consume time, demand inquiry, and end in nothing. I am thinking not merely of all that is going on out in the world. I am thinking of the very things God has given to you and me. He has given us the Bible, but we have been told that there is much study of the Bible that is without profit, and is absolutely detrimental.

When men study the Bible to support their own human theories, when they study the Bible to get argumentative material to advance their ideas, that is vanity and worse than vanity. When men go into the Spirit of Prophecy to gather material to support some pet idea, to drive home some fanatical conclusion, that is vanity and worse than vanity. Rid me and deliver me, David says, from strange children, whose mouths speak vanity.

I was looking at that expression, "whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood." I will call attention to the right hand. I will not say what David was thinking of when he wrote this, but I couldn't help but think of something when I read it.

We have been told that the great right hand of this movement is medical missionary work. God gave us a true medical missionary work, not a right hand of falsehood. We are told by the Spirit of God that there is something which passes for medical missionary work which is nothing but selfishness. And David prayed that he might be delivered from those whose right hand is the right hand of falsehood. I pray that God's movement today may be delivered from a right hand of falsehood.

Give us true medical missionary work, my friends. Unless we can have true medical missionary work, following out the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy, and dealing with selfishness instead of piling up millions of dollars for human beings to be selfish about, God knows we would be better off with an arm amputated than going around with a right hand of falsehood. God is going to have a people who are going to have both hands, the right and the left, that will not be hands of falsehood. They will be hands of truth and mercy and love and unselfishness.

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth;
that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished
after the similitude of a palace: That our garners may be
full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may
bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:
That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no
breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in
our streets. Happy is that people, that is in such a case:
yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD"
Psalm 144:12-15.

What a beautiful picture of joy and happiness. No complaining, no worry, no fear, but peace, prosperity, health, and success. Not rolling up millions on Wall street, but learning how to live for health and happiness and holiness. The key is in the twelfth verse. This is beautiful poetry. What is said of sons applies to daughters, and what is said of daughters applies to sons.

There are some beautiful figures of speech here. Notice that the young people are compared to plants. What are plants doing? Growing up. They are compared to cornerstones. What is happening to the cornerstones? They are being polished after the similitude of a palace.

Notice that the margin says cut. That is what has to happen to stones to fit them together to build a palace. We have all studied arithmetic. I want you to look at that text and notice that the process in arithmetic you would use to describe plants growing up in their youth is addition. Look at the next part of that text and notice that the process in arithmetic you would use to describe the cutting of stones is subtraction. A plant is adding all the while, but in the quarry the stone is being cut down to size.

I wonder if any of us here need to be cut down to size, and would be willing to be cut down to size? That is what has to happen to stones to be fitted into the palace. But that is only half the work. We are also to be as plants, adding all the time.

If I understand this text then, day by day there is something that needs to be going on in my life and your life. Part of it is subtraction and part of it is addition. We need to be losing certain things day by day, and we need to be gaining certain things day by day. Do you believe that? Do you agree with that?

Would you like to add some things? The addition is usually more pleasant than the subtraction. The growing is usually more pleasant than the cutting. We usually enjoy getting bigger more than we do getting smaller. But in our Christian experience we must have both of these things happening to us. Obviously the things we add are to be heavenly things, and the things we subtract are earthly things. The things we add are divine, the things we lose are human.

Do you believe youth is the time to grow up? It is interesting that most children like to feel grown up and act grown up. I was interested in reading some time ago an investigation that was made as to why teenagers use rouge and lipstick in high school and junior high school. They do it because they want to look grownup. When they asked some of the older folks why they used it, they said they wanted to look young. Interesting, isn't it?

My point is, there is something in the youthful mind that wants to grow up and be thought of as grownup; to look grownup and to act grown up. Yet it is amazing how stature can deceive. It takes more than five or six feet to make a boy into a man or a girl into a woman.

You folks who are eighteen or twenty, are you grownup? What about those of you who are twenty-five and thirty? Are you grownup? What about those who are in your forties and fifties? Are you grownup yet?

There are some things that are very beautiful in a baby that are far from beautiful in grown folks. We see a baby in its mother's arms and we say, Bless its little heart. If it cries people say, What does it want? Let's do something for it. Maybe it needs some milk or maybe it needs to be changed. There is a lot of attention given to a baby. And that is as it should be.

But if you come along sixteen or eighteen or twenty-five years later and see that same thing going on, would you laugh? You would weep. Still in the parents arms. Still being toted around. Still being listened to every time it cries.

My friend, have you grown up? Mark it. Have you reached the place where you do not have to have someone listen every time you cry? Have you reached the place where you are self-supporting? I am not talking about money. I am talking about being content and happy and satisfied. Have you gotten hold of Jesus Christ so that you do not have to have some human being on beck and call in order for you to be content?

I am not talking about being physically crippled. I am talking about selfishness which is childishness extended through so-called maturity in which people do not grow up.

David prayed that our sons may be as plants grown up. Mature. Developed in their youth. And that strikes directly at a false idea today that youth is the time to have a fling, to have a good time, and the time to settle down is later.

Youth is the time to settle down. It is the time to get your roots out good and deep in the soil of heaven that you may be as a plant grown up in your youth. In such an experience lies the truest pleasure. Young friends, I pled with you, do not allow yourself to remain childish. Grow up.

How will that be done? Jeremiah tells us it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth, carrying responsibility, taking on the burdens, the interest, the cares, the woes, the worries of others. That is one of the best ways to grow up. There are plenty of people around, young and old, that need the help that young hearts can give, errands that young feet can run, jobs that young hands can do. Oh, that God may bless every young person here with the experience of growing up in your youth.

I thank God that I see it going on. I see plants growing up. One of the greatest joys of my life in this training program is to see children and young people growing up for God. Not simply getting bigger by the scales and measuring lines, but getting hearts that can take on the burdens of others. Overcoming childishness. Overcoming sensitiveness. Overcoming their own way, and becoming plants in the garden of God to bear fruit for the glory of King Jesus. I am thankful for that.

Yes, we grow by addition. The only way any plant can grow is to get hold of some additional material. No plant can take a pound and make ten pounds out of it. Every time a plant grows ten pounds, whether it is a tree or a pumpkin, it is because it has drawn on the material from the soil and the air and the water. So if you are going to grow, you must add material.

That is why God has given us His Word. That is why He has given us the glorious instruction of the Spirit of Prophecy. That is why He has given us contact with nature. He has given us these abundant sources of material that from them we gather what it takes to grow. Let us be adding every day from the heavenly sources the material which will cause us to grow.

Jesus gave a lesson in the Sermon on the Mount on growth. He said:

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Matthew 6:27.

Can I do it? Can I by stretching and squirming at any stage of my experience, whether a babe, a child, or a youth add one foot by anxiously reaching up and trying? No I can't. And you can't do that in your Christian experience.

Do not try to grow by worry. When you measure yourself alongside Jesus Christ and see how small and stunted you are, don't go home and worry about it. Get on a good blood building and body building diet. Be sure there is plenty of spiritual minerals and vitamins in it. Don't confine yourself to one article of food. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4. We need the whole program God has given us in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Let's keep eating. No matter how much you eat, you cannot grow from three feet to six feet overnight. Don't try it. You will just gorge yourself and get indigestion and get discouraged with the whole program. God grows plants a little at a time. He grows boys and girls, men and women, physically and spiritually a little at a time. Be happy to work with God on that program.

"The things of God haste not, nor yet delay,
A tiny seed upspringing from the ground
Shall yet the knowledge of our God display,
And all the wisdom of this world confound.

Yea, as a tender plant unfolds her leaf,
And beauteous bud to tell His love doth op;
So wonderful and fair beyond belief,
Shall blossom in God's hour the child of hope.

Be thou that seed, be thou that plant, dear child,
Hast not nor yet delay;
The hour is late, yet there is time enough,
Here in thy Wildwood home just grow and wait.

God is building character. He is growing boys and girls into young men and women that will display His love in time's closing hour that our sons and our daughters may be as plants grown up in their youth. God grant it for every soul here.

The other lesson is the cornerstones cut and polished after the similitude of a palace. As we grow up and find out what life is all about, we discern that there is much that needs to be cut away from us. Mark it, there is not a soul here that has yet discerned how much there is to be cut away. It would discourage us. Believe me. When God gets through with us there will not be much left of what we had in the beginning. There will be so much added that came from heaven and so much cut away that came from earth that we will not look like the same people. We will not be the same people.

Listen, are you willing to endure the cutting process? Are you willing to have this thing and that thing cut away? If there is reason enough presented, any of us will be willing. What is the reason? That we may be a part of that glorious palace, the temple of God. Through all eternity God is going to exhibit the wonders of His grace, not just as individuals isolated here and there, but a building fitly framed together (Ephesians 2:21).

Stones have to be cut so they fit together. I was thinking the other day that if stones could talk, a stone of irregular proportions might say, "Look here. Instead of me being cut to fit with that stone, why couldn't that stone be cut to fit with me?" And I suppose the mason would have to say, "Perhaps it could."

It would be interesting to come to a building and see stones lined up one on top of another as they ought to be, but right in the middle of the wall you see a big irregular stone. All around that stone you can see that the other stones have been cut to fit that stone. Wouldn't that be interesting?

Suppose the stones were living stones. The stones in God's temple are living stones, you know. Can you hear that stone talking. He says, "Yes, I notice you all look at me. Well, I am something to look at. I am so important that everything else was cut and measured just to fit with me."

Would you like to be such a person? Would you like to be such a stone? Do you want everybody cut so they will fit with you? Do you want every menu on the place tailored so it will fit with your stomach? Do you want every Sabbath School program measured and tailored and fit to agree with your ideas? Do you want every Bible study arranged so it presents truth in exactly the sequence you think is the wisest and best? Do you want to go around with scissors or material and add or subtract to people's clothes so they exactly agree with your ideas of dress reform? Do you wish to censor every bit of literature that comes around to be sure it has exactly your ideas of what is correct and what is incorrect? How about it friends? Do you wish everything and everybody cut to fit with you?

Or, would you be willing to be cut a bit. Ah, but I don't need any. I am straight and square already. It is the other folks that are out.

You heard about the woman who went to see the parade of soldiers. They asked her how she enjoyed the parade. She said, "It was great, but every soldier was out of step except my son Johnny."

My friend, is the whole church of Christ on earth out of step but you? Is God's movement wrong on everything, and you right? Of course, if everybody else is wrong, and you are right, by all means stand. Elijah thought once that he was standing all alone. And I guess as far as his willingness is concerned, he was willing to stand all alone. God needs men who are willing to stand alone for principle. But the Lord had to remind Elijah that He had several others. Elijah himself needed some cutting.

What you and I need to have cut away is not principle. We have a lot of human ideas. By the way, did any of you ever change your ideas? I suppose we all

have. I trust we all have. I was interested to find that the prophet of God had to change her ideas on a number of things from time to time. And we all will change our ideas on several subjects. It won't just be the king of the North, or the Daily. There are several other things in the Bible that we probably need to study and get ideas. And if somebody says, Brother Frazee, if you have found out tell me quick, because I have been wanting to know, that is not my subject. My subject is, are we willing to be cut?

Are we willing to have pride and opinion cut into? Are we willing to have vanity and selfishness and censoriousness cut away from us? God grant that we may. I am glad the knife is not in my hands. Jesus is holding the knife. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 what the sword is. It is the Word of God. Here is the Word which is to cut deep into our thinking. And remember, when you and I study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, unless it does cut into us and cut off something, it proves one of two things. Either we have not opened our hearts to the Word of God, or we are already perfect. One of the two.

Oh, when I think of what it means to be a part of that beautiful temple, the temple of God, I say, Lord, cut me even though it hurts. Does it hurt to be cut? It ought to. I would hate to have us come to the place where cutting was a pleasant work. Wouldn't you? Yes. And don't think God is going to catch you and crowd you into a corner and tie you down while He works on you. No, don't think that.

A doctor cut on me once, but he didn't chase me and catch me to do it. In fact, I paid him to do it. I went in there of my own free choice and ask him to cut me, and then paid. There was something there that needed to come out.

Is there anything in you that needs to come out? Ask the great Surgeon to perform. Heart surgery calls for a specialist. He is guaranteed to do a successful operation with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The Word in written form is but the expression of Christ, the living Word. He is the Word.

We read in Revelation 19 in that wonderful description of His coming that His name is called, The Word of God, and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword. The Bible is the Word of God, the word of Christ. The Spirit of Prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Let Jesus, the heavenly cutter, cut and trim us and fit us so we fit with one another and fit with Him. What do you say?

Do you know the place where we can most successfully have that cutting done deeply until sin will be cut from us completely? There is only one place, and that is at the cross. Jesus on the throne is glorious, but on Calvary we see the glory of love. And seeing Jesus on the cross is the thing that flays selfishness, and takes it away from us. So I would like to have us think of the cross as the great cutting instrument that is cutting away on the hearts and lives of men if they will let it.

Come, let's let that cross cut our hearts. It will not cut us harshly. No. It is not the sword of harshness. It will not cut us roughly. No. It is a sharp sword. But it will cut us deeply. Its purpose is not to injure but to cut away the cancerous material that would take away our lives if it lingers.

How will it do it? When we look at Jesus on the cross we discern two things—the sinfulness of sin and the beauty of His wonderful love. That makes us want to give sin up and please Him by being like Him. When we see that our individual sins put Him there on the cross, we say, Lord, I don't want anymore of that. I want to quit sin. And the thing that cuts sin out of the life is seeing what it did to Jesus.

Seeing how sin broke the heart of the Son of God breaks our hearts. Seeing how sin cut Jesus cuts us. It cuts us loose from the sin. It cuts it out. And that is the cure for every sin.

It is the cure for pride. It is the cure for vanity. It is the cure for any sinful habit like whiskey or tobacco, or anything of that kind. It is the cure for gloominess and moodiness, for pettishness and sensitiveness. It is the cure for criticism and gossip. It is the cure for anger and passion. It is the cure for meanness, folly, worldliness.

There is no sin but what the cross is the cure for by seeing what sin did to Jesus, and seeing that He was willing to take our place and die for us.

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