

Elijah and John Message

#0847

Study given by W. D. Frazee

I want to study with you the lives of two men. One is Elijah and the other is John. The reason I want to study about these two men is because both of them represent a work that is to be done today. On the last page of the last book of the Old Testament I read:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" Malachi 4:5-6.

It is plainly said that Elijah is to come before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. The New Testament teaches that John the Baptist fulfilled this just before the first coming of the Messiah. In the first chapter of Luke we find that the angel Gabriel, the highest angel in glory, is sent from heaven to announce the birth of the greatest prophet. Jesus said there was none greater. And we are told by the angel Gabriel:

"He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" Luke 1:17.

The Greek word is Elias. The Hebrew word is Elijah. It is talking about the same man. So it is very clear that the work of John the Baptist was the first fulfillment of the coming of Elijah. He was not Elijah identically. He was not the same individual that had lived several hundred years before and gone to heaven. He was a child born in this world to Zacharias and Elizabeth. But he did the same work as Elijah, so he fulfilled the prophecy according to Jesus and the New Testament writers.

The thing I want you to notice is that the special coming of Elijah was not at that time. The particular coming of Elijah, the preeminent coming, the great coming, is said to be before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

When is that? In the second chapter of Joel we are given the signs that immediately preceded the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" Joel 2:30-31.

Those signs took place on the 19th of May, 1780, near the close of the 1260 years of papal persecution. These signs that were to precede the great and terrible day of the Lord herald the approach of the generation which is to witness the work and hear the message of Elijah in these modern times. And as that message was fulfilled through John the Baptist 1900 years ago, so it is to be fulfilled through a people today. Oh, I trust that each boy and girl as well as men and women shall consider the wonderful destiny to do the work of Elijah and to do the work of John the Baptist.

I want to share with you a statement that has been ringing in my ears. Speaking of Elijah:

"Among the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, there dwelt in the days of Ahab a man of faith and prayer whose fearless ministry was destined to check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel. Far removed from any city of renown, and occupying no high station in life, Elijah the Tishbite nevertheless entered upon his mission confident in God's purpose to prepare the way before him and to give him abundant success. The word of faith and power was upon his lips, and his whole life was devoted to the work of reform"
Prophets and Kings, page 119.

That simply states a fact that you observe as you read the record in the Scriptures from the 17th chapter of 1 Kings on into 2 Kings. The work of Elijah was essentially that of a reformer. He was seeking to turn the people of God from their apostasy back to obedience to God's commandments and faith in God's instructions. And it is literally true that his whole life was devoted to the work of reform. I wonder if that is important enough to devote your whole life to do?

There are too many people playing around the edges of it, and it will never get much done. Do you know what made Thomas Edison such a great success as an inventor? It is true he had an inventive mind, but the thing that made him successful was that his whole life was devoted to the activity of inventing. I have forgotten the number of times he worked out experiments and tried out plans to get an electric light... a good many. Over and over again he kept at it. Over and over again he tried this thing and that thing. Finally he came up with the answer.

He wasn't trying to run for Congress or become governor of the state. He wasn't trying to sing songs on the concert stage. He wasn't trying to direct an orchestra. He wasn't trying to write history or head a university. He wasn't trying to run a railroad. He had one thing that turned in his mind all the time, and that was how to solve those inventive problems to which he felt dedicated and devoted.

I am not suggesting for a moment that you be like Edison and give your attention to working out mechanical inventions. The Gentiles can do that pretty well. I am suggesting that if the Gentiles have among them those who can leave other things aside and consecrate the mind and life on one thing, certainly it is fitting that the children of God know the hour of their call, and answer this work of making ready

a people for the coming of the Lord; not with a few paltry half-hearted efforts, but with the devotion of the life.

That is what it took with Elijah. That is what it took with John. That is what it is going to take with those who actually do this work of making ready a people for the coming of the Lord.

I am not sure that very many of us here have actually caught the vision of the concentration that is necessary. I repeat, it is an easy thing to play around the edges of it. We are affected more or less by the great spirit of the present time to dabble in many things. A hundred years ago most people stayed in a certain place and did a certain thing. Today it is very hard to find anyone, no matter whether he is fifteen or fifty years old, who has been very long in the place where he was born. People are traveling around all the time. Many run to and fro.

Not only is that spirit of traveling around very characteristic, but that same spirit crops out in the things people do. People try this and that and the other thing. They want to dabble in many things. The great spirit of the times is the fear of missing something. Radio and Television minister to that. It seems to be the purpose to let everyone in the world know what is going on all over the world every day.

It is nonsense. Millions of people have lived and died without all that intimate contact with the events and the contents. It is taking a great deal of time and attention. Jesus says that in this generation men's hearts fail them for fear. Why? For looking after those things that are coming on the earth. They just look and listen, look and listen. And the more they look and listen the more disturbed and perturbed and worried and fearful and unsettled they get.

I want to make an appeal to every person in this audience tonight. Why were you born? What are you here for? Do you know your destiny? Will you be willing, like Edison, to leave a lot of other things undone and do the thing you are capable of doing? Will you like John the Baptist forgo the luxuries of life, the education that is conventional, the society of friends if need be, and get at the preparation that he got in order that you may give the message he gave? Will you be like Elijah and let your whole life be devoted to the work of reform?

Elijah's whole life was devoted to reform. Obviously that has to do first of all with the length of his life. From the time we see Elijah in the mountains of Gilead appearing to Ahab denouncing sin and calling for reformation until we see Elijah ascending in the chariot to heaven, his whole life was devoted to the work of reform. That is all he did. I want you to think of another dimension besides length. I want you to think of breadth as well. It was not only that Elijah devoted every day in a year to the work of reform, but all of every day. All his interests were centered in reform. All his activities were centered in reform. The way he dressed, what he ate, what he studied, what he did, what he preached, what he prayed about all had to do with reform.

He was a reformer. That was his job. God called him for that. That is why he was a prophet. He spoke straight truths. He lived a straight life. He gave a straight

testimony. He was a true witness. His whole life, not merely in length but in breadth, depth and height, and in every dimension was devoted to that work of reform. It wasn't just when he preached on Sabbath. It wasn't just when he led a prayer meeting, or held an evangelistic service. His whole life was devoted to the work of reform. I want an experience like that. Don't you?

That is why Elijah reestablished the schools of the prophets that Samuel had started. He restarted those schools in order that they might be centers of reform. That was their only purpose.

Mark you, it was not that he thought about all those young people and said, Well, they ought to have a better training to make a living, so we will establish a place where they can become expert professionals and make about a thousand dollars a month. No thought like that entered his mind. His whole life was devoted to the work of reform.

Under the guidance of the Spirit of God he selected young men here and there throughout the nation. He gathered them together and taught them the inspired instructions of the Spirit of Prophecy. What for? That he might develop teachers, educators, and counselors who would spread these principles of reform throughout the kingdom.

That is the reason God has told us to establish schools. And if God has called young men and young women to get an education, it is for that purpose. It isn't basically to enable you to make a living. It is to make a life; to build a character. Your whole life is to be devoted to the work of reform. Unless you intend to do that, why fiddle around? Why dangle your feet in the water? Why play with the matter? Oh, I beseech you with the message Elijah gave that day on Mt. Carmel, in Jesus' name, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" If the Lord be God do what? Follow Him all the way. If Baal is God, then go his way and forget the Lord God of heaven.

We have come to the hour of decision. It will not be much longer until among the people of God we will see a worldly trend and a heavenly trend. There is coming a separation. The message of Elijah is to do its work. The message of John the Baptist is to be given in all its power. The axe is to be laid at the root of the tree. The solemn call to repentance is to be heard in such a way that men will tremble. No longer will sin be allowed. The same God, who in the person of His Son entered the temple and drove the money changers and the sacrilegious priests from that sacred enclosure, will cleanse His temple today as He did back there.

This is God's church. This is God's movement. He began it. He will finish it. He has led it all the way, but He will not forever suffer within its precincts those who are leaning toward the world and away from reform. This movement is in its essentials a reform movement. It was, it is, it will be. And those who dare try to water down that message of reform and dilute that call to repentance will have to answer before a just and holy God.

God is calling for reform, my brethren, and He is calling for you and me to devote our whole lives to the work of reform. Oh friends, if this could get into the

very blood and bones of men and women we would not hear so much talk about what this person is going to do and what that person is going to do, as if all of this world were open to a thousand activities. There is only one mission for the young man or young woman who sees this vision. It is the work of Elijah and the work of John the Baptist to give with a trumpet call this message of reform and make ready a people prepared for the coming of the Lord.

And may I tell you quickly, the better any substitute for that is, the worse it is. The more saintly and sanctimonious is the call to engage in some other activity, the more it is to be feared.

We are told that all the relatives of Elizabeth and Zacharias thought that John the Baptist would be educated for the priesthood. And why not? His father was a priest. His grandfather was a priest. His great-grandfather was a priest. He was the only child in the family. They thought he would have priestly training. But God had something else in mind.

Instructed by the Spirit of Prophecy, Elizabeth and Zacharias moved from where they lived out into the wilderness. There in a quiet retreat that boy was educated far from the conventional schools of his time. Why? Because those schools were filled with a mixture of truth and error; a mixture of Scripture and tradition. We are told that John would have been unfitted for his mission if he had sat at the feet of the teachers of his day. By the standards of his day, John was judged to be uneducated. It was thought he didn't know much.

I wonder how many times relatives and friends came to Zacharias and Elizabeth and said,

"What are you doing with John?"

I suppose Zacharias and Elizabeth had a hard time explaining. Relatives and friends would ask,

"When is he going to school?"

Zacharias and Elizabeth would answer,

"He is going to school."

They would say,

"I don't see any school out here. Away with those silly ideas. He has got to be somebody. He will never be anybody if he stays out here in this wilderness. He will never amount to anything. He will never get a degree. He will never get any credit. He will never get any title. How will he ever get a position? What will he amount to?"

And that isn't all. I can hear something far more subtle than that. I can hear some who have a little inkling of what is in the mind of Zacharias and Elizabeth; some who were perhaps there on that memorable occasion when the tongue of the

father was loosened and with a loud voice glorified God and gave that marvelous prophetic description recorded in the first chapter of Luke.

I can imagine some of those earnest souls coming around to Zacharias and saying, Zacharias, I know you are planning God shall use your boy. But listen Zacharias. If he is ever to have any influence in the church; if he is ever going to be able to get people to listen to him and pay any attention to what he says, and if he is ever to accomplish the work of God, don't you think he should get some education? Don't you think you ought to get him fitted up so he will have some influence when he talks to the people? Why, the way it is, he is just off here in the sticks, and nobody will ever know about him. And even if you get him up to a high standard, what have you accomplished? What is it all going to amount to?

I imagine I hear Zacharias and Elizabeth talking it over among themselves, and Zacharias says, Wife, what do you think of that argument anyway?

I hear that Godly mother saying, Father, I think we had better listen to what the angel said, and do what the Spirit of Prophecy said, and not what all our friends and relatives say. If God thought enough of us to give us a special child, and to send the highest angel in heaven to give us a sermon on reform and tell us how to train this child, God will know how to use the boy when God's time comes to use him. We will not take him out of God's program to get him ready in man's way. We will trust God to give him an audience and give him influence when God's time comes.

Oh friends, I plead that we shall open our minds to the simplicity of God's program!

Just the other day I came across this statement:

"Children should not be left to come up as they will, unduly developing traits that should be nipped in the bud. But they should be disciplined carefully and educated to take their position upon the side of right, of reform"
Child Guidance, page 402.

Children are to be disciplined carefully and educated to take their position on the side of reform. What about it dear boys and girls? Do you love that word "reform"? You won't be on the side of it if you don't love it. Can you take the ridicule of it? Do you love reform? Children are to be educated to love reform.

"In every crisis they will then have moral independence to breast the storm of opposition, sure to assail those who take their stand in favor of true reform" *Ibid*.

Let me tell you, a real storm is just ahead. The storm of opposition is going to come to everyone who takes his stand for true reform, and it is going to burst with awful fury upon all who dare to take any stand on these matters of reform. You have no idea how relentless it will be. Some of it will come from men and women you would think better of.

Unless your feet are planted firmly upon the eternal Rock, unless you know Jesus Christ as your Savior and know His principles of reform as the guide of your life, and unless you have studied these things and lived them out in your life so fully that they are a part of every fiber of your being, you will be swept away.

There comes a time in the experience of the one who gives his life to the work of reform when those principles are so much a part of him that the only way the world could get those principles out of the way would be to get that man out of the way.

That's what Herodias knew. Herod's birthday was kept and they were having a great party. By the way friends, I would rather be in the dungeon with John than in the banquet hall with Herod and Herodias. What do you say?

I am afraid there are too many who claim to be looking for the Son of man who would have had invitations to that banquet and would have enjoyed it immensely. My point is, there was a wicked heart there that knew the only way to get rid of the rebuke of John was to get rid of John. So they took his head off.

That is the only way you can get rid of those principles of reform. Are those principles so much a part of your thinking, so much a part of your acting and speaking, so much a part of your whole life that the only way in this world anyone could get rid of them would be to get rid of you? If so, you will be a mark for the enemy.

You will also be one that the angels come to get as they came to get Elijah. That's right. God is going to have 144,000 translated today as faithful Elijah was translated back there. The work of reform today is to result in the translation of thousands of men and women and boys and girls whose lives have been so transformed by these principles of reform that they reflect the image of Jesus fully. Isn't that worth devoting the whole life to friends? What career can compare with that?

Someone says, If you just amount to something, then you might influence someone to accept these principles of truth. Tell me, how did Jesus do it? Did He go to the educational program of the great conventional system of His day and allow His mind to be permeated with those traditions in the hope that having received recognition He could then influence the Jewish nation better? You know He didn't.

I am wondering if there is anyone here who can improve on the method of Jesus. We know we can't, don't we? Oh, that we may be simple enough to do what Jesus says. I am alarmed when I think of how many are close by the fountain and are not drinking very much of it, close by the vision and not seeing very much of it. It is possible to be very close to a thing and yet not see much.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on the Mount of Transfiguration to see and talk with Elijah-- this very Elijah we are speaking of tonight. He was up there on the Mount with Jesus. But do you know what those poor sleepy-headed men did? They missed nearly all of it.

You can't understand that, can you? But that is exactly what is happening in the year 1956. It is sometimes pitiful to see people come from five hundred, a thousand, two thousand, three thousand miles to get something here, and someone who is close by can't even see it. I repeat, nearness to a vision doesn't necessarily mean that people see it.

You remember the question the disciples ask Jesus when they were coming down the mountain. You can read it in Matthew 17.

They had seen Moses and Elijah. They had heard the Father say, "This is My beloved Son." They knew Jesus was the Messiah according to that testimony. On the way down they asked Jesus the question, Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come before the Messiah comes? If you are really the Messiah, Jesus, then why is it that all these religious leaders say you can't be, because Elijah must come first?

Jesus said, It is true that Elijah must come first. But I have something to tell you, Peter, James and John. Elijah has already come. What? Elijah had already come? The scribes say he hasn't come. He is still to come.

Jesus said, No, He has come and gone and they didn't know him. They didn't recognize him. They treated him bad. His head is off now. He is buried out there. Then the disciples understood that He was talking about John the Baptist.

Multitudes are preparing themselves to fail to recognize the coming of Elijah just as it was back there. We are told that when the angel comes down from heaven with all the glory of the latter rain and the loud cry that there will be multitudes that won't recognize it. They will lift their voice against it. They will denounce it as fanaticism. They will not know the work of the Spirit of God. And Elijah will come and go and men won't know it has happened.

Oh friends, I pray that you and I will be among that little company who will let God have His way fully in our lives, and who will live for nothing else but to study these principles, live these principles, witness these principles, preach these principles, and talk them in private and public. There is nothing else to live for, for this is what will make ready a people for the coming of the Lord.

Reform? Yes. What kind of reform? Every kind of true reform: temperance reform, Sabbath reform, diet reform, dress reform, educational reform, medical practice reform, reading reform, parent and children relationship reform. Reform in the home, the Sabbath School, the life, and in the innermost spirit to make us reshaped and remolded after the image of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is the only one that can do it, but He must have our time and our undivided attention if He is to accomplish this work.

Our heavenly Father, we pray for the Spirit of God that was upon Elijah and upon John. We pray that our hearts may respond to the simple facts of truth, and not wait to be moved by some emotional wave. Teach us to act now as we shall someday wish we had acted. Teach us to be willing to be little and unknown in the

mountains of Gilead or amid the wilds of Judea that we may there learn the lessons of nature and providence and revelation, and like Elijah and John be fitted to bare a message of reproof and rebuke because of the prevailing apostasy, the worldliness, the indulgence, and the sin of this hour.

Teach us to so linger with Thee in the secret place of prayer and to so look upon Thy cross and behold the price of sin that it should lose its charm and no longer have dominion over us.

Teach us to so meditate upon the divine call to this mission of reform that nothing else shall have power to allure us, that we shall lose all interest in the callings and professions of this world, and that our whole life shall be devoted to the work of reform. We pray it for the children, for the fathers and mothers, and for each one of us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Copyright 2019. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org