

God's Way in Difficulty

Sermon # 0898

Study given by W. D. Frazee—September 21, 1962

Is it worth getting into trouble to find help? God tells us that His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8,9). One or the other of us will need to change if we are to go together. Are you willing to change so you will think like God thinks and recognize His ways? That is one reason we come here. Let's ask the Lord to help us to be susceptible to the divine molding.

"Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters,
and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest Thy
people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."
Psalms 77:19.

What a strange place for a path. Did it ever happen? David was thinking of the Red Sea experience. It is interesting as one studies the geography of that trip to observe that as the children of Israel left Egypt, guided by the pillar of cloud, they were on a course which would never have taken them to the Red Sea at all. If they had gone straight ahead they would have crossed or passed above the Red Sea. But after they had gotten out a little way God deliberately changed their course, and the cloud angled back and around so that they came to the Red Sea.

No wonder those who were looking to Moses as their human leader wondered what was the matter with him. But Moses was simply following the cloud. I suppose in his own mind he too might have wondered why the cloud was leading them in such a roundabout way. When they were hemmed in by mountains, and the Red Sea was in front of them, they looked back and saw the army of the angry Egyptians on the march.

We will not go over the wonderful story. I simply want to call attention to the fact that God's path on that occasion was right though the sea. And when you remember what happened you can see that God intended all along to lead them that way in order to make one problem solve the other.

There were two problems as they were encamped there. One was the sea in front of them which seemed to be an impassible barrier. The other was the Egyptian army behind them which seemed to be an enemy they could not defeat. God took the impassible barrier to be the grave of the unconquered enemy, and the children on the far side sang the song of victory to God.

Did Israel understand what God intended to do? No. If they had there would have been no test of faith. There would have been no problem. Did the Egyptians know what God was going to do? No. If they had they would have shied away. So neither God's friends nor His enemies understood His plan.

"Art Thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" Isaiah 55:10.

What did the sea of difficulty furnish for God's ransomed? A way. Thank the Lord. Here is a way, and it is not what you would pick out as a propitious place for a highway:

"And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted" Isaiah 49:11.

All over this country engineers are spending thousands of hours and millions of dollars trying to plot highways to avoid mountains as far as possible. But here God says He is going to take the mountains and make them a way. He is going to take the most unlikely situations, the most impossible, impassible barriers and make them the highway on which His remnant people will go through to victory.

So whether it be a sea which stretches before us vast and impassible, or a high mountain with walls that seem to defy scaling, God says He will take either one or both of them and make a way for you, if you will follow His providence.

Oh, if a man will believe that it will make him utterly immune to discouragement. Thank the Lord for the possibilities in it. Here is the echo of it down here in this last generation:

"Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. . .

"Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing" *Ministry of Healing*, page 481.

Where was the relief at the Red Sea? It was in the Red Sea. That was the way that opened up, and that was the grave of their enemies. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways of providing for us of which we know nothing.

"Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet *Ibid.*

Thank God, friends. Isn't that wonderful? Since this is so, instead of lamenting difficulties we are to look around to see which end to take hold of to get something done.

Moses didn't know what to do. All he could do was call on God, and tell the people to stand still and see the salvation of God. Presently God told Moses to take his rod and stretch it out over the sea. Moses had learned to look to God to see what he was to do with the circumstances as they existed.

Most everybody would have said, I don't see anything here to do anything with. There is no bridge. There are no boats. There is no way to get across. We are hopelessly lost. But Moses looked to God and God said, Take the rod and stretch it over the sea and the very difficulty will provide the way of escape.

"We should seize upon circumstances as instruments by which to work" *Ibid*, page 500

"Press with determination in the right direction and circumstances will be your helpers, not your hindrances" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 332.

Isn't that wonderful? Which is the Red Sea, a hindrance or a helper? It is a helper. If God has led you into it, it is a helper. So instead of weeping and moaning and saying, Oh Lord, why did you ever let me get into this situation? say, Dear Lord, I don't know what your purpose is, but You have something wonderful. Teach me what to do about it.

In the case of Israel there wasn't much for them to do except to show their faith by walking down into the water. As they did, what happened? It opened up. Thank the Lord. There wasn't much they could do, but it was important for them to show their faith.

Were they attempting the impossible? Yes. That is what righteousness by faith is. It is not lying down in bed hoping that some day by some strange, unusual miracle we will wake up and find we are all ready for heaven. It is not that. It is asking Jesus to help us to take hold of the situation as it is, and by faith attempt to carry out the commands of God believing that He will help us, and that He will never let us get into a situation but what he has made arrangements to use that situation for our good and His glory. We are to press with determination in the right direction and circumstances will be our helpers, not our hindrances.

Six weeks ago I was riding with Dr. Mandell and others along the Frazier river in Western Canada. As we drew near the end of our journey we had to cross that river. A canoe couldn't do it. Neither could a rowboat. How would we get across? I was very interested as I found how.

There was a ferry. It was not run by a gasoline motor or a steam engine or electricity. That ferry was run by the power of the river. There is a cable that stretches from one side of the river to the other. There is a cable that stretches down to the ferry from a wheel. You can see that it would keep the boat from going downstream, but how is it going to get across?

That is the secret. It has two levers. Each of those levers controls a great paddle that reaches out, one on one side and one on the other. They let down one of those paddles, and the very pressure of the water roaring down the river turns that boat in such a position it has to go across. When they want to come back, they put the other paddle down and the river pulls the ferry back again.

Man has seized upon circumstances with which to work. And that accomplished its purpose far better than a lazy river you could swim across. The difficulty is solved by harnessing the power of the river.

What a lesson. As you come to the difficulty in your life, whether the Red Sea or a surging river, don't just stand there and weep. Don't look back to Egypt. Say, Lord, what wonderful thing are you going to do now? Teach me how to find the solution to my problem. Help me to see Your hand guiding me and giving me sense enough to find out how to size upon circumstances as instruments with which to work.

When the three Hebrews were at the fiery furnace they didn't know how God was going to work, but they knew God had said, "Them that honor Me I will honor." They were determined to be true to God whether they lived or were roasted in the furnace. But you remember what God did. He took the furnace and used it not to burn up His children but the ones who threw them in. Another thing it burned up were the ropes that bound them. God used that circumstance to bring conviction to the king of Babylon.

Some time later, after a number of other experiences, that king was converted. What a wonderful thing.

Think of Daniel's experience. They made the law that nobody should pray to anyone but the king. Daniel kept right on praying to God. As a result they told him they were going to throw him into the den of lions because he didn't obey. Very well. I must obey God rather than men.

Did the lion's den hurt Daniel? Not at all. But that difficulty was used to eat up all the men who plotted against Daniel.

In our Sabbath School we have been studying about Esther and Mordecai. Haman was the wicked agent of Satan who plotted against the people of God. Tell me, what was it Haman was hanged on? The very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. God took the very difficulty and turned it into the solution to the problem. Over and over again God does that.

It is true that sometimes He lets His people suffer. It is true that in the Dark Ages He let millions be martyred. But that was not because He had forgotten, and it was not because this principle failed.

Everyone of those souls that went down in death won more people by their death than they could have by their life. In the kingdom of God they will see that, and clap their hands for joy that their witness as martyrs was used to testify to the power and love of Jesus, and to the strength of His law. They will be glad.

Many of them went to their death singing. There is nothing that stands in the way of the man who is devoted to God. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

I want to share with you something precious that just came to me the other evening. One of our students has had some experiences with the Lord, and the Lord has done some things for her in her native land that I want her to share with us.

Liddy is the only one in her family who is a Seventh-day Adventist. She comes from Nicaragua, and in that country the great majority are members of the established church, the Roman Catholic church. The Lord has blessed Liddy with some precious experiences in standing sometimes all alone for the truth. She was baptized eleven years ago, the only member of her family. She had some preliminary work in church school, but the time came that it seemed she should take a secretarial course. She took it for three years. It was her experience at that time I would like to have her tell us about.

"I thank the Lord for the privilege of giving my testimony, and praise to God tonight. I would be glad to tell you the whole story, but I don't know I will have time. So I am going to tell you about my last three months in this secretarial school.

"I was very near the time of the final examinations when there came to Nicaragua a group of priests. The priests came to the secretarial school because it was is very strong Catholic place. The people who carried it on were Catholic, and there was a strong Catholic influence. In fact, all the teachers were Catholics and all the students but myself. I was the only one in the school who was not. We had about three hundred students in the school, all Catholics.

"I am going to tell especially about the closing experiences in this school. After these priests had come, all the young people were supposed to go to the confessional, but I did not go. The lady who was in charge called me to her office. She asked me why I wasn't a Catholic. I answered her that I was very happy in the religion I was a member of.

"This lady said, 'If you will become a Catholic, your folks do not need to know about it.'

"I told her it was part of my religion not to lie, and I could not do anything like that. Whatever I do has to be in harmony with truth. After this she was very angry with me.

"One day, when we had to have an examination, I went to the class. I looked at the place where it told when we were to have the final examination. All my subjects were to be on the Sabbath.

I went to talk with the director of the school and told him I was a Seventh-day Adventist and I would not be able to take my examination on the Sabbath. He said there was nothing they could do about it.

"I went to my Aunt and Uncle where I lived. I was very sorry and told them what had happened. They told me it would be necessary to pray much about it.

"The next day I went to the pastor of the church to tell him about my problem and asked for his council. He said there was nothing he could do about it, but that it was entirely a matter of conscience with me.

"I began to pray very earnestly to God and asked Him for the solution to this problem. When the time came for my final examination I went to church on the Sabbath as was my custom.

When the service was over and I came back to my house it was a great surprise to find at the house a group of my fellow students waiting for me. They spoke with great happiness. They said they were not going to have the examination on the Sabbath because the people who were in charge of the examination got drunk and were not able to have the examination. So the examination had been postponed until the next day, Sunday.

"Up to this time I had been so sorry about the way things were working that I had not been able to study. But when I got this news it gave me great courage.

That night I studied. I remember I studied until very late. The next day I went to my examination and sat down. At other times when I had examinations I was quite nervous. I do not understand it, but this time I experienced a peace that I had never known before. I took my paper and began to do my work. I was very happy I got through the examination with a good grade. I got the best grade in the class.

"I still had the problem of two more examinations, each to come on the Sabbath. I continued praying, and I had the faith that God was going to help me. When the next Sabbath came I went to church again.

After church the same young people came and were waiting for me on the porch. Again they were very happy. They said they didn't understand why things were happening as they were. On this occasion the particular

teacher who was to have charge of the examination had to go to the hospital to have an emergency operation. Again the examination was postponed until the next day. I went to my examination as I had the week before, and again I took the examination and received the best grade of all in the school.

"My last examination was again on Sabbath. It was to be the last one. It was my examination in shorthand. I went to church on Sabbath as always. I didn't lose one minute praying to God. I prayed all the time.

"Again, as before, when I got home from church the young people were waiting at my house. They said that only the power of God could work things out as they were. This time it was as it had been the first Sabbath. The men who were in charge of the examination had been to a feast the night before and were drunk. The examination was postponed until the next day. On this occasion I went to my seat, and as before I finished first and had the highest grade in the school.

"Thanks to God. The verse in Matthew 21:22 has been an experience that has been fulfilled in my life. I would like to have you all read this verse. 'And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'

"Thanks be to God for this experience which has been to me a great help in increasing my faith. May God be with every one of you, and thank you for your attention."

Thanks be to God.

Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee with all our hearts that the God who opened the Red Sea and delivered His faithful children from the fiery furnace is still at work today. Grant that everyone of us here shall learn Thy way which is so much different from our way, and shall be prepared to see in the Red Sea the way through, and in the mountain a way over. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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