

Glorying in Knowing God

Sermon #0922
1961

Study by W. D. Frazee—January 20,

Our text this evening is found in Jeremiah the ninth chapter, verses twenty-three and twenty-four.

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” Jeremiah 9:23.

Now notice these three things which God tells us we are not to glory in. Not in riches. Not in wisdom. Not in power. We all know that those are the things that men are glorying in, but God says, Don't glory in those. Glory in one thing, that is in knowing God.

This is something to glory in. Do we know Him? And are we glorying in Him? Are we glorying in the fact, in the experience, the fact that we know God, are we glorying in that?

Now this has in it nothing akin to egotism, far from it. It lays the glory of man low in the dust, my friends. But it substitutes for it something infinitely greater and more substantial, more satisfying, the glory of knowing God.

I like to think about that little boy who was walking with his father on one of the busy streets in the Loop in Chicago. Surrounded with those milling multitudes, the father thought he would test his little son, and so he looked down, and he said, "Sonny, where are we going?"

The little boy looked up and said, "Daddy, I don't know, but you do."

That is it dear friends. Instead of our wisdom, which is foolishness, we have His wisdom if we know Him. Instead of our riches, rags, we have His riches, "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Philippians 4:19, if we know Him. And instead of our strength, which is weakness, we have His all power, and in our human weakness we are enabled to do the deeds of omnipotence.

We find that in Gospel Workers page 113. And all this remember is through knowing Him. Do you know Him? Are you acquainted with Him?

There are some friends that we can tell at quite a distance just by their walk. Do you know the steps of God? Can you tell when He is around? Even those heathen magicians down there in Egypt, at a certain point had to acknowledge, "this is the finger of God." Exodus 8:19.

Do you recognize God's intervention in human affairs, in your life? Have you trained your mind to read aright the signals of His providence? Do you recognize His workings?

Let us study, dear friends, how He works, for observing His ways we shall come to know Him. His work reveals His character. His ways show His thinking. Let us never forget that He says, "Your thoughts are not My thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so are My thoughts greater than your thoughts, and my ways than your ways."

Now to know God, to achieve this goal of really knowing Him, we must quit every other race, we must forget every other quest, and concentrate on this alone. I am going to read Philippians the third chapter, verses seven to fourteen, as Weymouth translates it. I think there are some things that will stand out quite vividly as I read this modern English.

"Yet all that was gained to me, for Christ's sake, I have reckoned it loss. Nay, I even reckon all things as pure loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And for His sake I have suffered the loss of everything. And reckon it all as mere refuse in order that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from law, but that which arises from faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God through faith. I long to know Christ and the power that is in His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and die even as He died in the hope that I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead. I do not say that I have already won the race, or have already reached perfection, but I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it: but this one thing I do, forgetting everything which is past, and stretching forward to that which lies in front of me with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus" Philippians 3:7-14, Weymouth Translation.

Isn't that wonderful friends? Yes. Now let's look at some of Paul's expressions. You notice that he says, "for His sake I have lost everything." As you King James puts it, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss" what for? "For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

To know Christ was worth more to Paul than everything else, anything else. In fact, He said that he had lost everything else. Had he been a rich man? Yes. But

had he lost those riches? Yes. The riches of this world he lost. Think of it friends, he came into the gospel message a rich man, but we see him a few years later working with his hands to secure the means to support himself and his fellow workers in his efforts to spread the message. Is that correct?

But did he feel bad about it? Why no. He said I am glad. I am glad to have lost everything because I have gained everything. I have gained the knowledge of Him. But ah, he says, there is more beyond. I haven't obtained the fullness of it. I am pressing on. This one thing I do. Everything else must be out of the way.

Notice he says:

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" Philippians 3:, KJV.

Goodspeed translates it "rubbish." Go up here to the barn. See that manure pile, that rubbish pile. Paul says, that is where I have put everything that I have had. All the honor that people used to give me, it is gone on the dung hill. All the riches I used to have, it is on the refuse heap. All the wisdom that I used to have that men thought so wonderful, I have thrown it out there. It is all gone, that is where I want it that I may know Christ.

Well, Paul was a bit fanatical. Don't you think? He was a bit extreme, or at least he was indulging in some extreme language here. What do you think? Ah no, friends. This was the consuming passion of his soul. This one thing I do, he said, that I may know Christ. Also remember, when he wrote these words he was writing by what? Inspiration. He was no fanatic. He was zealous, but not without knowledge. Thank God, friends, he had a true evaluation of things.

When I see people straining to get a tiny fraction of what Paul had in riches, or in honor, or recognition, or fame, or position, when I see them in their race to get those things missing this one thing, I feel sorry. Paul would feel sorry. Oh, he said, Brethren come with me in this race, this one race, where all can win, for this is offered to each one, the knowledge of God.

The knowledge of God.

Now there are two great parts of this process of knowing God. One is sharing the fellowship of communion with Him, and the other is sharing the fellowship of cooperation with Him. Talking with Him, and working with Him, that is the way we know Him. And in each of these, there is His part, and my part.

Let's look at this matter of communion with Him. Sharing the fellowship of communion with Him.

Is there a part He has in that? Oh yes. He talks to me through nature, through the glory of the sunrise, the beauty of the sunset, through the stars in the night, and the glorious sun in the day. Through the little flower blooming between

the rocks in the cliff, through the bird songs, and in a thousand other ways in nature, God is speaking to me if I listen. Is that right?

Thus I come to know Him through His Word, through this precious Bible, He is speaking to me. Through these inspired volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy, the Shepherd's voice is heard. And by the impressions of His Spirit on my mind, God is talking to me. Through nature, by His Word, and through His Spirit, Christ is communing with me. And in prayer, I talk to Him.

It may alone on my knees, or it may be here in the public assembly. It may out loud in secret prayer, or it may be in the midst of the busy throng in silent prayer. But as I talk to Him, and He talks back to me, day by day that communion becomes more real, and thus I know Him more and more. Dear friends, this communion with Jesus, as He speaks to us, as we speak to Him, makes fellowship with Him more and more real from day to day.

Now while we are cultivate thinking of Jesus and talking with Him as we go about our work, as we walk up and down the roads and the trails, the streets, unless, watch this point, unless we have time set apart for personal communion with Him those other opportunities for communion will largely go unrecognized.

You remember that when Jesus was here in this world, while just a boy up there in Nazareth, a young man in the carpenter shop, He used to go out from morning to morning when He had opportunity, an commune with His Father. We are told that the early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. *Desire of Ages*, page 90.

Now our children today are encouraged to follow His example. And boys and girls, any of you that are old enough to understand what I am saying, this is for you. This is not for the babies, they can't do it. But they won't understand me anyway. But all the boys and girls that can understand me, here is something wonderful for you. Jesus has a special appointment with you every morning, and every evening.

I read about it here in the book *Education*.

"Let the youth follow His example in finding at dawn and twilight a quiet season for communion with their Father in heaven" *Education*, page 259.

Sometime in the morning, boys and girls, before you come to breakfast, have a little time if its only a few moments when you kneel down by your bed, or in weather that is favorable, out in nature, someplace where you can be alone with God, kneel down and talk to God and ask God to talk to you. And in the evening, do it again.

And then it says:

"And throughout the day let them lift up their hearts to God" *Ibid*.

Now if we will do those two things, if we will have, children and older ones, if we will have the quiet time alone with God, let Him speak to us, and we speak to Him, and then if through the day we will be thinking of Him, and talking to Him silently as we go about our work, those two things together, oh how it will enrich our lives, and fill our hearts and minds with the knowledge of Him.

You know this adds on this page:

“Could our children learn these lessons in the morning of their years, what freshness and power, what joy and sweetness, would be brought into their lives!” *Ibid*.

Do you want joy boys and girls? Do you want precious, happy experiences, young people? This is the key. And all of you who have tried it know that it is so. But ah, dear ones, it is possible to have gotten some of this sweetness, and then, through failure to press on into these experiences, get restless, or worried, or dissatisfied, or unsatisfied. But believe me, the answer is found only in knowing Him.

This is what the soul wants, it is God. This is what every boy and girl longs for whether he knows it or not. It is Jesus. Thank God, friends, if we will seek Him, we will find Him. He says, “those that seek Me early shall find Me.”

Let me share with you this beautiful suggestion from *Ministry of Healing*.

“Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor” *Ministry of Healing*, page 511.

If you are walking from your home to where you work, cultivate the habit of talking with God as you go from your work to home, or from your home to work. Cultivate that habit. Just get into that habit.

You say, well how can I do it, I forget?

Listen, if you will do it every time the Spirit prompts you to do it, if you will make a covenant with God, Lord if you will just remind me to talk with You, I will do it, and carry out that resolution, you will find that day by day God is prompting oftener and you are noticing it oftener, and you are noticing it oftener. You won't have to worry about it, and you won't have to keep a check list to see how often it happens. No. Just grow into it like the flower opens from bud to bloom.

Oh friends, Paul said, I am going to put everything else out of the way and devote my life to one thing, to knowing Him. Let's enter in with Paul. What do you say?

But now, while sharing the fellowship of His communion is half of it, it is only half of it. If it were all of it, God would want us to follow the example of the monks, the hermits, who have withdrawn from society and gone to some cave, or some monastery, some cell, and there devoted their lives to communion. But God has not

invited us to do that. He has not suggested that that is the program. Has He? He Himself gave no such example, or no such call.

Ah my friends, let me tell you that the fellowship of cooperation with Him is just as important, just as vital in this matter of knowing Him as the fellowship of communion. We must not only visit with Him, we must work with Him. Only thus will we know Him.

You remember Jesus said concerning the fellowship between Him and the Father, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." They were working together. And if we share the fellowship of His communion, we shall be inspired to share the fellowship of cooperation, working with Him.

Now watch, friends, that doesn't mean running off and working without it. It doesn't mean getting so interested in something that we merely breeze through some formal prayers and then rush off to carry out our plans. No. Not running off without Him, neither lagging behind. Working, not lagging, but working with Him. And remember, as we quoted from Isaiah, our ways are not always His ways, His ways are not always our ways. So we must be ready to change our plans and our ideas in order to fit into His plans.

Remember in the little pocket Edition of *Steps to Christ* page 70, we read that we are to lay our plans where? At His feet. What for? "To be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate."

What is His providence? Do you know how to lay your plans at His feet, and then carry them out as His providence shall indicate, or lay them aside as His providence shall indicate?

Well, first let's notice how not to do it, friends. Maybe that will help us see how to do it.

"Some are teaching the truth to others, when they themselves need to be taught the first principles of the Christian religion. They are at war with God through his providence" *Gospel Workers*, 1892 Edition, page 438.

Think of it friends. Here are people trying to work for God, and trying to teach others and they are at war with whom? With God. Through His...? Providence. God is trying to do something, and they are trying their best to keep Him from doing it. Yet, they are working for Him, think they are, trying to. No wonder they are unhappy.

"They are at war with God through his providence. They watch for something to feel bad about; and they never fail to find it ... They are always dissatisfied. Their work is too hard, they are not appreciated, or they do not receive sufficient compensation. If anything crosses their track, they draw back like pettish children ... They are a constant source of anxiety and care ... One day they

appear to be humble and affected by the Spirit of God, and our hopes are awakened; but the next day something occurs which drifts them into another current, and they are harder to get along with than a willful child" *Ibid*.

What is the matter? Why they don't understand God's providence. They lay plans, but they don't know how to lay them at God's feet to be carried out, or given up as His providence shall indicate, and when God's providence indicates, they can't read the indicator gauge. They think it is something to fight, instead of something to understand and cooperate with. So they complain.

"Some seek to control their surroundings, thinking that if they are placed in favorable positions, the bad traits in their character will not be developed. But God orders our surroundings, and he will place us where we shall have test after test, to prove us and to reveal what is in our hearts" *Ibid*.

You know I was talking to two young people just the other day, and I reminded them that at New Year's time the Lord gave each of them a new experience. Then I reminded them that the servant of the Lord said writing to someone, "I knew that you would be brought over the same ground."

Ah dear ones, let us never think that repentance, and confession, and conversion are a way to get around, or away from the trials. Not so. If we have been in some trial, and we have failed, and we get down and ask God to forgive us, let's not add, "and Lord, please never let me have that temptation again," because that is not a prayer of faith. That is a prayer of doubt and discouragement.

Oh friends, remember that when Peter had denied his Lord there in that courtyard through fear of the people around the high priest's palace, it was only a few weeks later that he was brought into that very place, and had to witness for Christ before all those people, and take a whipping along with it. Do you remember that? That is right.

The Lord didn't say to the angels, "Well now you remember Peter. He is really sorry now because he failed. Now we must get him off to some quiet place where nobody ever bothers him, because, unless we do that, he might lose his temper and swear again."

No.

God didn't say that to the angels. He brought him into the same situation, the same problem, and this time, to the glory of God, Peter stood up there in holy confidence and boldness and gave his testimony.

Why friends? Because he had learned to know God.

And if you and I will learn to know God, friends, instead of wasting the time, worst then wasting the time, of managers and committees, trying to get them to

arrange this, and that, and the other thing favorable for us so that we can keep sweet, ah friends, we will be able to accept the circumstances and surroundings that God's providence arranges, and say, "Lord, there is just one thing I want, it is to know You, and to reveal You so that others will know You." God haste the day when the glory of God will be revealed fully in the lives of all His children. I thank God it is coming friends. I see the dawn of that glorious day, and I thank God for it.

Now here is a very similar statement to those I have just read.

"It is dangerous to contend with the providence of God and to be dissatisfied with almost everything, as though there had been a special arrangement of circumstances to tempt and destroy. The work of pruning and purifying to fit us for heaven is a great work and will cost us much suffering and trial ... Those who follow their inclinations and are governed by appearances are not good judges of what God is doing. They are filled with discontent. They see failure where there is indeed triumph, a great loss where there is gain" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol 3, page 67.

Oh friends, can it be that as this message surges on to triumph that some people will have eyes to see it as glorious victory, and other people will say, "I don't see anything to be happy and cheerful about. It all looks bad and depressing to me." Can that happen? Believe me, friends, it can happen here, and now.

Oh that God may give us the eyes of faith.

You remember what Jacob said as his sons came back to Egypt, and he recited the problems as he looked at them, "All these things are against me," were they? Not one of them. They were all working for him. But the poor old man lifted up his voice in lamentation. So today there are those that see the difficulties, they see the problem, and they see them as obstacles that cannot be overcome, problems that cannot be solved, ah friends, I say it earnestly, such do not know God.

They do not know God. God longs to have us, in the very viewing of the problems and getting into them with hearts of faith, to learn what kind of God our God is, and then we will be ready to attack anything that He lets come in our way, that would stand between us and victory.

Yes. But all this is dependent upon our having met with God in the mount of communion. Unless we share with Him the fellowship of prayer, and study of His word, we will not know how to work with Him. We will miss the signals. We will find ourselves lost in the woods, and we won't know how to fit in with God or with our brethren. Oh, but if we will get down on our knees we will find Him again, and then we will let Him lead us in His way, willing to lay aside our plans.

May I call attention, friends, to the danger of running ahead, and then saying, watch, "Oh, Lord. Help me quick. Here is a great big obstacle right in my way. Help me quick to get this obstacle out of the way." And All the while it may not be in the

way at all, that is, it may not be in God's way. It is in our way. True. It is a life-size obstacle. But how did it get there? God in His providence may have allowed it to be there because it wasn't the way He intended for us at all. We just got excited, or got interested, or wanted to carry out our selfish plans, so we ran there, and then we cry, "Oh Lord, help me!"

We need to learn to wait on God, friends.

I read something very interesting in volume one. It was written to a man and his wife who were very interested in health reform. In fact, they had given up swine's flesh at a time when our people as a whole had not taken that step yet.

Well you say, "that surely was wonderful. They were way ahead."

Yes they were. They were ahead all right. On that point. They thought everybody else ought to come running up where they were. And they were quite critical of the church, and the leaders of the church, you can read about it. Notice the inspired message that came to them.

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. ... The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead. ... But some restless spirits do not more than half do up their work. As the angel leads them, they get in haste for something new, and rush on without divine guidance, and thus bring confusion and discord into the ranks" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol 1, page 207.

The whole page is wonderful to read, friends. Let's not think when we run ahead of God and His providence, and His movement, and then run into obstacles that we have the right to call out heaven's fire department to settle our problems. No, friends.

The problems may be in God's providence to cause us to stop and think, now let me see, how did I get into this problem. We may have been sincere, we may have wanted to bring glory to God, but we have succeeded only in bringing shame to ourselves. But let's do what this says, "meekly retrace our steps," find Jesus in the secret place of prayer, and then lay our plans at His feet to be given up or carried out as His providence shall indicate.

But while we need to be cautioned about the danger of running ahead, we need also to avoid lagging behind. If we are sharing with Jesus in communion and cooperation, then friends, we will not lag behind through fear because he says, "Fear thou not for I am with thee." Isaiah 41:10. We will not lag behind through laziness. The vision of His love will call forth all the energies of our souls to keep up with Him, and keep step with Him. And we will not lag behind through inattention, we will not

allow our minds to be diverted by this and that on the side. We will say with Paul, "This one thing I do."

Now if we are following that program, friends, do you know what the result will be? Listen:

"Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed"
Ministry of Healing, page 473.

Think of it. If we are following God's way, our plans will often fail. Well isn't that to bad? No. That isn't to bad. It is good.

"Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed"
Ministry of Healing, page 473.

I remember, as I read that little sentence here, how God used it to bless my soul one Friday evening years ago in San Francisco when I was a young man, what would be called a ministerial intern now, before they had ministerial interns. I had been working with Elder Tyndall for a few years assisting in various ways. The day finally came when Elder Tyndall said, "Well Bill, perhaps this fall when we finish the large campaign, perhaps you would like to go over here to another section of the city and organize, and hold a little effort of your own?"

That appealed to me. There was another young man going to assist me. We laid our plans together. I even took part of my vacation to get my subjects all laid out and arrange my advertising. I was looking forward to a wonderful time that fall. The time drew near, just a few days before the meetings were to open, and this Friday afternoon I happened to be in the church office, and the telephone rang, and Elder Tyndall was on the other end of the line.

"Well Bill," he said, "the conference president and I have talking, and it has been decided that you won't hold that effort." He went ahead to tell me some of the reasons, harvest ingathering was coming along, and they wanted some good earnest work done in that, and there were some other things that needed to be done. The brethren thought that with those things that I would be needed for there wouldn't be time to do those and the effort both. So it had been decided.

Well right then I was like some of this people I have been reading to you about. I was at war with God through His providence. I began to argue about it on the telephone, and finally I began to cry. That's right. Right there on the telephone I was crying. I couldn't see why the thing that I had planned to do wasn't the most important thing in the world. It was a good thing, it needed to be done. Souls were at stake.

Well, the conversation finally came to an end as those things must finally you know. Elder Tyndall tried to quiet me and reassure me, but I finally hung up feeling quite moved. I got down praying. I was all alone there in the office. Then I reached up on the mantle and I got down *Ministry of Healing* and I read this.

“Our plans are not always God's plans. He may see that it is best for us and for His cause to refuse our very best intentions ... In His loving care and interest for us, often He who understands us better than we understand ourselves refuses to permit us selfishly to seek the gratification of our own ambition. He does not permit us to pass by the homely but sacred duties that lie next us. Often these duties afford the very training essential to prepare us for a higher work. Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed” *Ibid*.

And before I got through that time of communion with the Lord all there alone in the little office, I had made a full surrender of the whole thing to the Lord. After all, it was His work, friends.

The next morning I called Elder Tyndall on the telephone and apologized to him for what I had said, and the way I had said it, and left it with the Lord. Well, you know dear friends, probably I should tell you the sequel of it. It finally worked out that we were able to carry out the plans that had been laid and still hold the campaign with the full understanding and cooperation of all. The Lord gave us twenty-five souls baptized in that little campaign.

But my point is this, friends. Why did God let that barrier, that obstacle, that problem that seemed that there was no way to solve, why did He let that come up? Ah, because I needed to learn a lesson. Who knows, if that had not come up, perhaps we might have held a campaign, and perhaps nobody would have been baptized? Who knows?

God wants to lay the glory of man low in the dust, friends. He wants us to give up our selfish striving to carry out our way, our plans, even in the work of God. He wants us to have a trust in Him that we know that God is working out His will. And a love for Him that we want His will more than we want anything that we ever wanted for ourselves. When we combine that love and that trust, then friends, there is nothing for us to worry about and nothing for us to be afraid of because we know God. We know He is all-powerful, that nothing can stand in His way, and that He loves us, and that we can trust Him.

Praise His name, friends.

I am so thankful that I have learned something about what a dear friends He is, what a wonderful Father, what a wise Leader, what an Omnipotent King. I am sorry that I have delayed His work in my life so much, so many times, through selfish, stubborn, willful ways. But oh how patient He has been, and really friends, the more I know Him the more I love Him. The more I thank God that He is able to make me like Him through knowing Him.

So like Paul, I want everything that I have been, everything that I have on the refuse heap. I want to quit every race, and forget every quest, except this one thing, that I may know Him in the fellowship of communion and in the fellowship of

cooperation, to visit with Him, to talk with Him, to work with Him. That is the supreme delight of the soul, and we shall share it here and through eternity.

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