

Acceptance of Authority

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Study by W. D. Frazee—March 15,

"I will teach you the good and the right way" 1 Samuel
12:23.

Samuel was a prophet. He was chosen as the Lord's messenger when a boy. That which he taught, of course, was what God taught him. And if we will listen to the spirit of prophecy through the Bible and the revelations that have come in this last generation, we too will be taught the good way. I want to walk that good way. It is a good way. It leads to from where we are to where our Father is in the city of eternal life.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that
keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"
Revelation 14:12.

Those who welcome Jesus when He comes keep the faith of Jesus. They are masters of the science of faith. They have such an understanding of faith and such an experience in faith that they are linked with Christ. They keep the faith of Jesus. Isn't that wonderful?

"In the prayer of faith there is a divine science. It is a
science that everyone who would make his lifework a
success must understand" *Education*, page 257.

What kind of science? Divine science. Here is a science in the prayer of faith. So if you and I want to be successful in our lives, we must understand this science.

Just praying isn't enough. All around the world people are praying. Over in Tibet they used to have little prayer wheels. They wrote out prayers on pieces of paper and put them on the wheel so the wind would blow. And every time the wheel went around, it was another prayer.

But this is talking about the prayer of faith. What is faith anyway? It is for every Christian, and I want you to see that. It is for you. If you learn this science you will be able to make your entire lifework a total success.

Wouldn't you like to be a success? So many people are failures. I heard someone say that when a man is twenty he builds a castle, and when he is forty or fifty he builds a dog house. Very few people achieve what they set out to do. But you and I can have something far beyond the most wonderful goal we ever dreamed of if we will just learn this science. It all depends upon it.

Hebrews 11 is a wonderful chapter on what men and women have done through faith. It is a gallery of the famous who have made their lifework a success through mastering this science of faith. I read:

"How to exercise faith should be made very plain" *Ibid*, page 253.

Suppose we were to divide this audience into two classes—those who understand how to exercise faith and those who don't. Which group would you be in?

Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean that anyone here would claim to be a master of this science. This is not merely talking about perfection of Christian character. It is talking about how to begin the Christian life.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" Hebrews 11:6.

The faith this is talking about is not something that comes years after we begin to walk with God. It has to come at the beginning. It can grow. Everything in Christian experience grows. But the person who begins the work of God must understand how to exercise faith.

There are two reasons why I want each of you to get hold of this. One reason is for yourself, and the other reason is so you can teach other people how to exercise faith. There are thousands of people who are trying all sorts of things out of bottles and interviews with people who are supposed to help them solve their problems. But if someone could sit down with them and show them how to exercise faith it would be the answer.

There is a place for certain scientific things. But those who have the most to do with the problems both of the body and the mind agree that one of the great things that is making thousands upon thousands of people sick is lack of faith. So if you know how to exercise faith, and can make it plain, you will be able to help someone that all the wise men of this world cannot.

Wouldn't you like to help someone exercise faith? You can.

The man who comes to God must have faith. Without faith it is impossible. Would you like to try an impossible thing? Not if God says it is impossible. You won't succeed. And it is impossible to please God without faith.

He that comes to God must believe. Then what is faith? Faith is believing. It includes more than what most people think of as believing. In John 3:16 it is written that everyone who believes will not perish but have everlasting life. That is exactly true. We are told that if there were no other texts in the Bible, that text would be sufficient to make plain the way of salvation.

Paul summed it up in those words to the man in the prison as he cried out at midnight, What shall I do to be saved? Paul said:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" Acts 16:31.

There are those who take texts of that kind and put a great deal of stress upon believing, and narrow down the act of believing and the experience of believing and simply say, I believe. Well, we are going to see that there is more to it than that.

"To every promise of God there are conditions"
Education, page 253.

If you read a promise and see no conditions, remember that there are. If they are not stated on that page, they are stated somewhere else.

So to believe God is to believe what He says when He says there are conditions to His promise. To simply say, I believe His promise, and I know it is going to happen whether I do anything about it or not, is not faith. It is presumption. We are told that the path of presumption lies close beside the path of faith.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" Galatians 3:24.

The last word in this text is what we are studying about. And one of the important things that comes is to be justified by faith. That means to be accounted righteous. Here is a man who is a sinner. He is on the way to hell. He is going to lose eternal life. He deserves it. He has sinned. But is there escape for him? Yes. He can be justified by faith. Who does he have to come to? Jesus. Is Jesus the Savior? Sure.

"And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" Matthew 1:21.

Jesus will save us. But in order to be saved we must come to Him. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Suppose I say, I will skip the schoolmaster. I will go to Christ and pay no attention to the schoolmaster. Can I do that? Some people think they can. They think there is something uncomfortable about this. Is there? Sure. The law condemns him, and offers him no hope. The law was not meant to offer hope to sin or sinners. Oh, no. It was meant to condemn sin and sinners.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" 1 John 3:4.

Oh friends, I want to understand that in its simplicity and far reaching importance. Thousands, millions talk about Jesus and lift a cross, but have no use for the law. Can men be saved without the cross? Oh, no.

"Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope" *Acts of the Apostles*, page 209.

What is it that is to bring us to the cross? The law. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. Watch as I read:

"Those only who acknowledge the binding claim of the moral law can explain the nature of the atonement"
Selected Messages, Book 1, page 229.

Here is a man who does not acknowledge that the ten commandments are binding. Can he explain the nature of the atonement? This says he can't. Why on earth will men wade through the volumes written by men who do not acknowledge the binding claims of the law of God to try to understand the atonement? The only book in this world that can help you to truly understand the atonement is some book written by someone who acknowledges the binding claim of the moral law. You can ponder on that a long time and find more in it.

When I come to Jesus on the cross and watch that great sacrifice, looking at that which the Father said the atonement is complete, unless I have been led there by some understanding of the binding claims of the law of God I utterly fail to understand what is happening on the cross and utterly fail to understand what is supposed to happen to me. Both are essential to understand the atonement.

I am seeking to study a practical lesson in the science of faith. I am seeking to study how to come to the cross by faith.

The acceptance of authority is not a popular subject. Truth is seldom popular. Jesus has plainly told us that those who finally arrive at the pearly gates will finally walk on a very narrow path. But if there is anything that the law stands for and teaches, it is authority. That is basic in authority and all law. And before you and I can appreciate in its fullness the love of Calvary, and understand what happened there, we must come to the place where we see the binding claims of the law of God and accept God's authority.

Unless we understand that, we will suppose, as millions of people do, that somehow or another the cross is a substitute for the law, and that what Jesus did was to make it unnecessary for you to do anything in the way of obedience. In other words, to put it bluntly, we will suppose that Jesus released you and me from the obligation of obedience.

If that were so, or anything like it, what a blot that would be on the honor of God. Think of it. God makes a law that people can't keep, and when they break it He lets His dear Son come down here and keep it, suffer, and die a most terrible death to fix things up so you and I don't have to keep that law that couldn't be kept. What a blot on God's wisdom and love. The whole thing is preposterous.

I don't suppose anyone here would accept that in its bold, blunt features, but there are shades of it that filter in from Babylon. We need to be entirely delivered from it, and accept authority, and understand that the purpose of the sacrifice on the cross is to endorse and acknowledge the authority of the law. When Jesus died, He, the lawgiver, proved that the authority of that law was so important that His own life must be sacrificed to sustain its claims. And also the purpose of that sacrifice on Calvary is to help you and me get back to full obedience to that law. Thus you see that there is a double vindication of the law. Christ keeps the law, and dies to pay the debt. Then, through His atoning sacrifice, He works out in human beings a righteous character. Those who let Him come to the place where they say with Him:

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" Psalm 40:8.

Notice these two tables. The First Commandment starts out with that basis of authority:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" Exodus 20:3.

The very first question is the question of what? Authority. You don't go any further until you meet that one. Do you accept the authority of God? Will He be God to you? And do not think you can bypass that and run to Calvary and say, Jesus died for me, so I don't have to let God be God to me.

No. The purpose of Calvary is to bring us back into harmony with that. The law can never bring us back. We broke it. But it can point out our failure.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" Exodus 20:12.

This is the only commandment with promise in the decalogue. And notice that as the First Commandment is the basis of all divine authority, the Fifth Commandment is the basis of all human authority. Where does it come from? From God.

"For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" Romans 13:1.

And they derive their authority from the Fifth Commandment. Let's put the magnifying glass upon it:

"He who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 308.

If I reject the rightful authority of my parents I reject whose authority? The authority of God. Notice:

"It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority" *Ibid.*

God has delegated some of His authority. He has delegated some to parents, some to teachers, some to ministers, some to governors and policemen. Wherever I go in this world I run into that.

Someone says, That's the trouble.

Well, some people do run into a lot of trouble on that. I wonder why? I wonder if there is something fundamental about this lesson that we need to learn?

I imagine that in the army a lot of men learn to obey for the first time in their lives. I imagine it is one of the great problems the officers face. Children who have been having their own way since they were old enough to cry are suddenly brought face to face with the authority of the United States Army, and what a shock it is. But friends, even though army discipline may be stern and even severe at times, it is possible to go clear through army training and never learn this lesson. The lesson I am talking about is the acceptance of authority; coming to the place where we say, Lord, I love your law, and I love the authority of anyone You have placed over me.

I pray that God may teach us that lesson in the quiet of this vesper hour. For those who wait for the coming of Jesus, and welcome Him when He comes, along with keeping the faith of Jesus, will keep the commandments of God. While they will be condemned as breakers of the laws of men, they will really be the only true citizens in the final crisis. They are loyal to God and loyal to every divinely constituted authority operating in its proper place.

Every child who comes to the cross receives an experience there, and accepts an experience there which means, I bow my neck to the yoke. I accept the law of God as the yoke of service.

Have you done that?

Too many times when people get into trouble they get sorry and turn to God, and then are led into the same temptation and say, Well, it doesn't do any good. People make it hard for me even though I have sought the Lord.

The cross of Christ was never intended to take the place of obedience for you and me. It does as far as our past is concerned, because we have no way to go back and do that over again. But the only way that thief on the cross was saved was by throwing himself on the side of Jesus and His law. It is true the thief only had a few hours before he died, but I believe every moment of those hours was a conscious acceptance of the authority of God's law through faith in Christ. And if he had come down from that cross through some miracle, I don't think he would have gone back to stealing. He turned from lawbreaking to loyalty to the law.

True, he could do nothing about it there on the cross except his change of attitude. And that is what I am talking about. It is the attitude, the acceptance of authority.

You remember the story Jesus told in Matthew 21. A father said to each of his two boys, Son, go work today in my vineyard.

The first son said, No, I won't go. But afterward he went.

The second son said, I go, sir. But he didn't go.

There are two ways to disobey. Which is your problem? Are you the one who openly likes to defy authority and say, I will do what I please, and who is going to make me different? Or are you the one who smiling agrees with those who talk with you, and after they are out of sight figure out ways to evade and fail to do that which is required?

Every one of us has both those tendencies in our hearts. If we don't know it, it is because we haven't looked into the law long enough. But thank God, we don't have to indulge those tendencies. We don't have to be like the mule that sets its stubborn will and says, I defy you to make me move. Neither do we have to be like that boy who said, All right, but when the day was over had not been in the vineyard.

Which one of those is your problem? Some people have such a strong will that they rise up against authority. Others tend to be more peaceful and nice. Sometimes they have quite a nice reputation. But those who know them best are often perplexed because they are not really accepting authority. They are figuring out their own way instead of the way they are asked to walk in.

Samuel said, I will teach you the good way—the way of obedience, the way of loyalty. That is what the cross is to bring us back to. And the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

What will you do about it, friends? Will you count yourself clever in getting around the authority you are connected with? Or will you go to Calvary and weep tears of repentance because you had evaded the claims of authority, and have encouraged and influenced others to do the same?

One of the signs of the last days is that people are disobedient. That is not just babies. It starts there, but the reason we have so many disobedient children is because we are living in a generation of parents who never learned to obey when they were children. It is very difficult for them to teach what they never learned. It is amazing the un-Biblical attitudes that are manifested today by so-called Christians toward authority in the home, the school, and the church.

Come to grips with the fact that those who make a success of their life's work will learn the lesson of faith. They will master the science of faith. Faith means believing God and meeting the conditions of His promises. Faith means coming to Calvary by way of Sinai. Faith does not mean bowing down at Calvary and saying, Lord, I am so glad You paid the debt so I won't have to do anything. I am so glad You died for me so I can confess my sins. And no matter what I do afterward, I know I have hope of heaven.

Not that at all. Faith means seeing God's law, and seeing that the basic lesson of the law is the acceptance of authority, divine and human. Then it is coming to Calvary and seeing that Jesus died to make plain there is no way to set it aside. He, the lawgiver, died under the penalty of that law. Now He offers to take His death and apply it to our credit, if we will with Him put our necks into service of obedience.

Don't misunderstand me. I do not mean that God will not save us until we have demonstrated obedience. That is righteousness by works. I don't mean that at all. The penitent child cries to Jesus and says, Oh Lord, I am sorry I broke Your law, and please change my heart so I accept authority. That choice must come at the moment of acceptance.

Let us let His holy law be our schoolmaster, and let Him through this law lead us to Calvary with a new understanding and appreciation of what Christ did for us there by that infinite sacrifice. He laid down His life that the law might be upheld, and that you and I may be brought back to harmony with that law here on earth, and through the eternal ages.

As you see what the Word of God teaches, how many of you are ready to say to Jesus? I will accept Your authority both in heaven and earth, and I will look to Calvary to stimulate my soul to prompt and true obedience. May God add His blessing.

Our Father, we thank Thee with all our hearts that Thou hast spoken to us tonight. With humility we acknowledge that we have been disobedient children. Forgive us, dear Father. Strike the arrows of conviction to our hearts. Where we have been defiant or evasive, God forgive us and change our hearts, and let the precious blood of Jesus fall upon us from the cross until we hate sin as He hates it, and love His holy law as He loves it. We believe and accept and thank Thee that as we accept Thee and Thy arrangement, Thou dost accept us through Jesus, our Lord, Amen.

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