

How to Exercise Faith

Sermon #0940

Study by W. D. Frazee—February 22, 1963

Those who welcome Jesus at His coming will be noted for commandment keeping, and also for keeping what? The faith of Jesus. Let's say that verse together.

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

The only way to keep something is first to get it. Nobody ever kept anything yet until first he had it. So we want to be sure that we have this faith of Jesus, and know how to keep it.

Now faith is very simple, but there are rules, there are laws that govern the exercise and development of faith.

"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.

So wanting to make our life work a success, I am sure that we desire to know how to exercise faith. Do you remember that wonderful chapter, Hebrews eleven, in which we have a whole gallery of the heroes of faith. The men and women that through faith did things, one after the other, successful things. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and so on down through. All those wonderful things they did, they did through what? Through faith.

Friends, we are told that those things weren't written just so that we could read and wonder, they are not just stories like Jack and the beanstalk, or some other foolish thing like that. Neither are they the exploits of supermen that however true the story is, there is nothing for us to do about it except to sit back and gasp and say, oh my, that was marvelous.

These experiences, we are told:

"...were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power"
Ibid, page 256.

I think we have already crossed the threshold into those things. And wonderful things are just ahead. Wonderful things are all around us. But the richer gift, the larger blessing is ours if our faith will reach out and receive it. But friends, thank God it is within reach. It is in reach. It is not held above us like a man teasing or tantalizing some dog, telling him to speak for it but always holding it out of reach. No. Thank God these things are for us.

God wants us to enter into the wonderful experiences of both the Old and the New Testaments that we may see, and hear, and feel, and know for ourselves that these things are so. But now remember, faith is what puts us in possession of these blessings and experiences. So we are going to study about faith.

Faith is believing God's promises, and to every promise of God there are what? Conditions. The man that pretends to believe, the man the fools himself into thinking he believes without meeting the conditions is not exercising faith but what? Presumption. That's right. It is too bad dear friends. Too bad.

I will tell you the difference. Faith is sitting on the train perfectly assured that I am going through, I have got the ticket in my pocket. God paid for it. I have met the conditions. Presumption is sitting there, saying, "Well I will get along alright, I am just as good as anybody else in this coach," but oh, wait a minute, presently the conductor comes along and says what? "Tickets please." Will he go through? No. Where will he go? He will go off. That's right.

And looking there at the people in the seats, you can't tell the difference, friends. But the conductor finds out. Oh, I trust that none of us will wait until the examination day to find out whether we have our ticket or not, friends.

Faith is believing God, meeting the conditions, and then knowing that what He has promised will come to pass.

Now, I wish that you would look at Hebrews 11:6. There is something in it I want to study.

"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.

Now the first condition is to do what? Believe that He is. Now if that simply means to believe that He exists, friends, then the Devil and all his hosts are well on the road because James makes it very clear.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" James 2:19.

So Paul apparently is talking about something more than just the acknowledgment of the fact that God exists. Faith, that he is speaking of here, believes that God is, the man that has faith acknowledges God's sovereignty as well as His existence and yields to that. In other words, implicit in this first condition is the acceptance of authority. The acceptance of authority.

In other words, Lord, I believe You are on the throne, and You are running things, and I accept that, and I choose it that way. I want Your way. I want to accept Your authority as exercised directly, and through Your delegated representatives in church, and state, in home, and school, and institution. I yield. I give up my stubborn will. I want God to have His way.

Oh what an important step in faith that is friends. But now this next one, that is the one I want you to notice.

“...and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” Hebrews 11:6.

Now you notice, Paul says that this is something that the man that comes to God must believe. Not the man that goes away, but the man that comes. You haven't even come until by faith you say, Lord, not only do I believe that You are, and that You are on the throne, and I accept that, but Lord, I believe that You are going to hear me, and give me the thing that I ask which You have promised. Isn't that nice?

That is what faith is. I hope as we look into it, we will see how very very simple its exercise is on this point. You know the photographic reprinting of these old *Reviews* is proving a great blessing, and as noted in the announcement there is a bonus feature not only do we get all those Spirit of Prophecy articles, but since they photostated the pages that the articles were on, there are other articles as well, and while I have had very little time so far to look into the volumes, by chance, or rather by providence, my eye fell on a little story in the *Review and Herald* of January 13, 1863.

There was this little incident and it was used as an illustration of this text, Hebrews 11:6, “without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

“When a child who had lost her mother was once asked, ‘What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?’ She answered, ‘I go to the Lord Jesus. He was my mother's friend, and He is mine.’ And in reply to another question whether she thought Jesus Christ would attend to her, ‘All I know,’ she at once replied, ‘He says He will, and that is enough for me.’” *Review and Herald*, January 13, 1863.

Now what did that girl have? She had faith. “All I know, He says He will, and that is enough for me.” Could you put it any better?

“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.

I simply take Him at His word,
I praise Him that my prayer is heard,
And claim my answer from the Lord,
I take, He undertakes.

Now tonight I hope that everyone of you that have already learned something about exercising faith on this will reach a rung higher, take a step forward, and if there is somebody here tonight that has never taken the step of faith on this point of just believing that God hears you, I hope you will do it tonight.

My mind goes back to an experience of around thirty-five years ago. I was just a young fellow in evangelistic work, we were doing a great deal of personal work in connection with the meetings, and I went one day out to see a young couple that were going to the meetings, and as I talked with those young people, I found that they were struggling with the decision of accepting God's truth, God's message for today, the Sabbath. And of course I led them into an understanding of the fact that Jesus was the only one that could help them, and that they would need to open up their hearts to Him, and explained how He comes in, if we open the door He will come in and give us power to obey, to keep His commandments, all of them.

I explained how we could kneel and pray. Well, apparently those young people had never prayed in their lives. There they were, young married people, they didn't know how to talk to God. They knew how to talk to men, talk to each other, carry on business, but they didn't know how to pray. So I had the privilege as I have had with many to kneel down with them and help them to frame their first, shall I say, baby cries. And oh it is always a joy when people really mean it to see them reaching out for God, and opening their hearts to Him.

But as we help them, they made their surrender, and opened their hearts to the Lord, and when we got up from our knees, I shall never forget how the young man looked into my eyes, and He said, "Do you think He heard us?" And it wasn't the question of doubt, but I suppose it was just to good to be true, that God, the King of the universe, would listen to them.

Well, what do you suppose I said? "Of course He did. Of course He did."

Thank the Lord, we had the joy a few weeks later of seeing them baptized into the faith of Jesus and the third angel's message.

Well, my point is friends, this thing of opening the heart to God and believing that He hears us when we pray that is faith. And we exercise faith, we have the thing we pray for.

I simply take Him at His word,
I praise Him that my prayer is heard,
And claim my answer from the Lord,
I take, He undertakes.

Now perhaps I should be even more simple and more practical in this matter of how to exercise faith on this point? God has been good enough to put the very

words in our mouths of what to say. You will find it in the book *Messages to Young People*.

“Say, ‘I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper’”
Messages to Young People, page 153.

Now I want you to notice that that is conditional. You have no right to believe that God hears you and is going to help you if you persist in hanging on the stubborn rebellion against God, and His word, and His law. That isn't faith, that is presumption, for on this very same page, in the same paragraph just a few lines above it says:

“Will you not, without delay, place yourself in right relation to God? Will you not say, "I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now," and from this moment be wholly on the Lord's side?” *Ibid.*

And then following a few lines, these wonderful words:

“Say, ‘I will believe’” *Ibid.*

But you see, before we can say I will believe, I do believe that God has heard me and can help me, we are to say, “I will..” what? “I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now.” First surrender, then trust. And always in that order friends. First surrender, then trust.

“I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now’ ... ‘I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper’” *Ibid.*

Turn over to Mark nine and I want you to see how it is put in this wonderful experience right here in the Gospel of Mark. You remember the story beginning with the thirteenth verse. Christ and the three had come down from the mount, they had been up there with Moses and Elijah and had heard and seen wonderful things. Now as they came to the foot of the mountain they saw the multitude gathered there. A father had brought a boy that was possessed of an evil spirit and had many physical ailments as the result. The nine disciples had been trying to do something put their own hearts full of doubt and murmuring, they couldn't do anything. The Devil mocked them. The scribes that were gathered around mocked them.

Now as Jesus comes, they all come running to Him. The father pours out his hearts plea, and begs Jesus to do something. You will notice it says here, after Christ had asked in the twenty-first verse about the matter, the father described his awful condition, and then in the twenty-second verse, the last part, he closes his appeal with this.

“But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us,
and help us” Mark 9:22.

What did he say? If. If.

Well Jesus at once responded to that if didn't He? No He didn't. He didn't do anything of the kind my friend. You cannot if when you come to God. No. There is no if with God at all. The if is all with us. So Jesus at once put the if back on him. The man said:

"But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" Mark 9:23.

Oh I hope we will go over that so many times friends that we will know it just like we know our name. Thank God the man didn't have to have it gone over and over again with him. Right away, it says:

"Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" Mark 9:24.

Well that is the way to say it friends. Do you want to exercise faith? Surrender to Jesus and then say Lord I believe. And if you have to add, like that poor fellow did, "help Thou mine unbelief," add it. You don't need to, but if you need to, do it. The important thing is those first three words, "Lord, I believe."

You see there is a simplicity about this that people miss. People suppose that they have to wait until they get a certain feeling, until they feel way up on a mountain top and they suppose that is faith, and then they say, "I believe." It is the other way around, faith is what you climb the mountain with so you get up there and have the glorious view, and the happy feeling. That is it.

What is faith? Faith is saying, "Lord, I believe."

But somebody says, "Suppose you don't feel like you believe?"

Believe anyway. Believe is an act of the will, that is the thing that I want you to see. It is your privilege to believe. I understand, of course, you can't believe something that isn't so against the evidence of your senses. But I want to ask you friends, do you believe God? Do you really? Remember what that little girl said I read about?

"All I know, He says He will and that is enough for me"
Review and Herald, January 13, 1863.

You see all our life we are dependent on the word of men. Every day we are accepting the word of men. We regulate our lives by those promises. We buy a ticket and we lay out plans to go to Chicago, to New Orleans, to Denver, or wherever. What is that ticket? It is nothing but a promise that some railroad company, or bus company, or airplane is going to take us over there. That is all it is.

But we rest pretty well between the time we buy the ticket and the time we take off, don't we? We don't say, "My, I wonder if they are going to let me on? I wonder if they are going to take me? I wonder."

I we believe the word of man, the Word of God is greater, isn't it friends? Sure. You know what these "greenbacks" we carry around, you know what they are don't you? Well they are just a promise from the government, one dollar is payable to the bearer on demand. This says I can go up there to Washington and get a dollar. But you know you and I believe that promise so much, we don't even bother to go up there and get a dollar, we just pass the promises around, and everybody takes them. Isn't that right?

Well why not do that with God friends? Thank God, His dollars don't get devalued every now and then. The bank of heaven has never had a run on it that depleted its gold stock.

Imagine the city where the main bank is, they use gold even to pave the streets, they have so much of it.

My God shall supply all your need according to His riches
in glory by Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:19.

I simply take Him at His word,
I praise Him that my prayer is heard,
And claim my answer from the Lord,
I take, He undertakes.

In other words, friends, accept your acceptance.

Did you ever think about that prodigal son when he came home? Now he had been a rascal, there is no question about that. All that the older brother said about him was true, and then some. And he himself said, "I am not worthy." Did he tell the truth? Yes he did.

You know in spite of all the love of his father, and all the forgiveness of his father, if the son had insisted, he could have gone out to the barn and just made him a bed up there in the hay. Couldn't he? He didn't even deserve that much goodness, did he? I suppose that something like that was in his head when he started from the hogpen. But by the time the father had gotten his arms around him, and gotten his coat around him, and talked to him, and loved him, and the tears ran down the fathers face and the boys face, the son believed that the father really loved him and wanted him where? Inside.

I wonder if there is anybody here tonight that say, "Oh I wish God loved me that much." Well friends, the good news is He does. He loves you just that much, and a world more. But if you insist on slinking off and hiding yourself, if you insist, on climbing in and crawling in with the dog, and taken your meals with the dog, you may call it humility and a sense of your unworthiness, but I want to tell you something friends, it breaks the Father's heart. In some ways it break His heart more than being down there in the hog pen, or running around with the sinner.

God longs to have you come inside. He loves you. So He says, "Come. Come." Now mind you, the boy in coming in, he had to accept the father's authority,

but he had settled that when he started back from the far country. Hadn't he? Yes. If he had come dragging the gamblers, and the harlots, and the whiskey, with him, I don't think the father would have had a feast for him, and said, "Well son, we hate to have you drag all this stuff in here, but since you're the son, we will let you do it." I don't think anything of the kind, friends.

He came empty-handed. He came confessing his sin, and giving up his folly. And with that settled, the father's love was boundless, the father's forgiveness was full, and the father's pardon covered everything. Let's take it the same way today. What do you say friends?

"I simply take Him at His word,
"I praise Him that my prayer is heard"

Here this thought of not worthy, but accepting is so beautiful expressed in these lines. Let me share it with you.

"Not worthy O Lord of Thy pardon, not fit to partake of Thy grace,
Not worthy, My Savior, but longing to live in the light of Thy face.
Not worthy to cling to the promise of cleansing and healing divine,
But eager to come at Thy bidding, and claim all that Thou givest as mine.

'It is not because I have asked Thee, though Thou hast encouraged my prayer,
but Thou who dost love me has offered my sins and my sorrow to bear.
God offered, and I have accepted the cleansing, the joy and the light, and into
my life there is flowing a wonderful beauty and might.

"Still higher, as onward I journey my will rises up to Thine own, for God
Has accepted a sinner, and I have accepted a throne."

I like that. "God has accepted a sinner and I have accepted a throne."

"Not worthy to praise Thee with jubilant spirit and breath, then crown me O
Christ with Thy merit, or sin and temptation and death."

What do you say?

Now listen friends, I here people praying sometimes, you know sometimes I wish we had tape recordings of our prayers then we could listen. I here people telling the Lord how unworthy they are, and then praying that they might be worthy of His blessings. Now if that is what they really mean, then I just have to say that they don't understand the Gospel. I think sometimes it is just an expression that we have heard from somebody so we copy it off. But you stop and think a minute. Just how would you and I go about to be worthy of the blessings God gives? Well I wouldn't tell the Lord that I am going to try to be worthy of His blessings. No. No. No.

I would like to make Him happy by expressing my praise for His blessings that are a million times greater, and richer, and more wonderful than anything I could ever deserve, friends. I am not going to try to work over time trying to work up to the place where I will be worthy of all His blessings. To tell you the truth, you can't do it

friends, for He is always to steps ahead of you. The more you open up your heart to Him, the more He floods your heart with blessings, and He says, "I will pour you out a blessing that there will not be..." what? "Room enough to receive it."

Lay down that burden and worry of trying to get worthy of God's blessing. You can't do it, friends. Don't wear out your life at it. Just remember there are two things, and only two things, that you need to do.

One is—accept His authority.

The other is—accept your acceptance.

That is it. Settle it that you surrender, and settle it that you trust Him. Say, "Lord, I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now, and I will believe, I do believe that Jesus is my helper." That is it, friends. That is it. That is the way of faith. That is the way of joy.

Why, look at it here in Mark eleven.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" Mark 11:24.

What is the thing to do when you pray? Believe. Right then. Believe.

A mother tells a story about an experience she had with her little ten year-old boy. His grandmother promised him a stamp album for Christmas. Well, she probably promised him because she knew he wanted it. Some boys and girls they just want a stamp album. So this boy wanted a stamp album, and his grandmother promised him one. She lived in another state.

Well Christmas came, but there wasn't any stamp album. And no word from his grandmother. However, nothing was said about it, and the day after Christmas his playmates were over there visiting with him, and he was showing them the different presents, and the mother was astonished to hear him say after he was showing them this present and that present, and he added, "And a stamp album from grandmother."

So after she heard that several times as different playmates came and went, she called the little fellow to her, and she said, "Now George, what about this? You didn't get a stamp album from your grandmother. Why did you say you did?"

And the boy looked up at his mother wondering why she would ask him the question, and he said, "Well Momma, Grandma said, so it is the same as."

And the mother, she didn't have the heart to say a word to check his faith. So a month went by and nothing was heard about the album. So finally one day the mother thought she would say something more about it to test his faith, she asked George if he didn't think that grandmother had forgotten her promise.

“Oh no,” he said, “she hasn’t forgotten.” But since the mother had raised the question, he stood there thinking about it, and then he came up with this. He said, “Momma, do you think it would do any good if I should write to her and thank her for the album?”

So the mother says, “Well, I don’t know, but you might try it.”

And so sure enough, in a few minutes he had the letter written. And he went off whistling, and in a few days here came the letter, and I want you to listen to the letter from the grandmother.

My dear Georgie,

“ have not forgotten my promise to you of an album. I tried to get such a book as you desired, but could not get the sort you wanted, so I sent on to New York. It did not get here until after Christmas, and it was still not right, so I sent for another. And as it is not come as yet I send you three dollars to get one in Chicago.”

Your loving Grandma

As he read the letter his face was the face of a victor, “Now Momma didn’t I tell you?”

What was it folks? Faith. That is right. Now back to this text.

“What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” Mark 11:24.

Not worthy, but willing. And the first step is the acceptance of authority, and the second step is the acceptance of our acceptance, of God’s acceptance of us.

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