

Fitting Action to Occasion—Anvil

#0569

Study given by W.D. Frazee—February 11, 1966

Let's turn to 1 Samuel the tenth chapter and the seventh verse. Now these are the words given to Saul through the Spirit of Prophecy. And Saul, while a young man, had been called from his ordinary duties to be King of Israel. And this day's experience that we are reading about here tonight is the first intimation that had come to Saul that he was to be chosen for that duty. Samuel told him certain things there were going to happen in his future. And in the seventh verse, he added:

“And let it be, when these signs are come onto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee” 1 Samuel 10:7.

You notice that even having a living prophet does not release a man from the responsibility of making decisions at times. The vision that God gives His servants are not for the purpose of making us automatons, just computers, or machines of some kind. The human mind has a very important part to play in working out the plans of God. And so although the living prophet was there and was guiding Saul, nevertheless, the prophet told him now this and this and this, these things are going to happen, but when they happen, do as occasion serves you for God is with you.

The American translation puts this:

“When these signs come to you, do as the occasion demands” 1 Samuel 10:7, American Translation.

Moffit translates it:

“Do whatever the occasion demands” 1 Samuel 10:7, Moffit's translation.

That is what I want to study with you tonight. Fitting the action to the occasion. This anvil is going to help us, friends. Now there are many examples of this all the way through Scripture, but I would like to notice first of all and most all the example of the Great Example, Jesus. Let's turn to Matthew the 27th chapter, verses 27 to 30. Now this, as you will observe, is Friday morning. Jesus is undergoing a farce of a trial and the terrible abuse and suffering that preceded His crucifixion. I want you to notice the

attitude of Jesus. I want you to notice how He related himself to these circumstances. Matthew 27 beginning with the 27th verse:

“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head” Matthew 27:27-30.

What a picture! Who is this? This is Jesus. The son of God. The King of the universe. Here He is crowned with thorns and the soldiers and the rabble mocking Him, kicking Him, hitting Him, spitting in His face, abusing Him in every possible way.

What is He doing? Oh, He is being the meek lamb. Why? Because that was a part of the plan that His Father had laid and that He had laid with the Father before He ever came to earth.

In old *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 1, we have this picture described:

“There stood Jesus, meek and humble before the infuriated multitude, while they offered him the meanest abuse. They spit in his face--that face which they will one day desire to be hid from, which will give light to the city of God, and shine brighter than the sun--but not an angry look did he cast upon the offenders. He meekly raised his hand, and wiped it off”
Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1, page 51.

Think of it, friends, they spit in His face. He didn't hit them. He didn't even look mean at them. Could He have ordered them away? Well, His divinity could have shown through and instantly dispatched them or scattered them. They could have howled in fear or fled in terror, but He bore it all.

“He meekly raised his hand, and wiped it off. They covered his head with an old garment; blindfolded him, and then struck him in the face, and cried out, Prophecy unto us who it was that smote thee. There was commotion among the angels. They would have rescued him instantly; but their commanding angel restrained them” *Ibid*.

Did Jesus know the angels were there ready to rescue Him? What did He do? He bore it.

Turn to the 50th chapter of Isaiah. I want you to see the inspired prophecy that puts this all down in such a graphic way:

“The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting” Isaiah 50:5-6.

Did they actually pull the hair out of His face? Yes. And spit upon Him. Hour after hour the cruel abuse went on. But He bore it all. Not once did He strike back. Not once did He stop them. He bore it all.

“It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men” *The Desire of Ages*, page 703.

He took it. He bore it. Willingly. Gladly. He bore it all. What meekness! What lamb-like meekness!

But now, dear friends, I want you to go back to Matthew and I want you to see something that happened less than a week before this. This thing that we just looked at, when did it happen? Friday morning. Now let's go to the 21st chapter and see what happened on the Monday morning just before it. Just a few days before. The same week. Here is the same Jesus and the same people. Now let's see what is happening.

“And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” Matthew 21:12-13.

Is this the same Jesus? What is He doing? Is He submitting? Oh no. No, He is not submitting. He is giving the orders. He is clearing the temple of the desecraters and with an authority that could not be questioned He dismissed them and bade them leave and not a one questioned Him. Not a one held back.

Three years before He had done the same thing. You remember in the beginning of His ministry. John tells about it. That time He had picked up some cords and made a whip, He never touched them with it, but He held it up as a symbol of authority and punishment, and they scattered when He told them to leave. Divinity

flashed through humanity, but this time He didn't even pick up any cords. He just stood there and looked over the scene. The lowing cattle and the bleating sheep, the angry money-changers, selfish and greedy, quarreling about prices, and the priests in there getting their share. Greedy. Selfish. Dishonest. Making money over the worship of God.

And as the King of heaven and the Guardian of the temple, He stood there and He said, This must cease. My house should be called a house of prayer. You have made it a den of thieves. And He bade them leave, and they did it.

Is that the same Jesus that a few days later just a few yards from there received from those same men the abuse that we just read about and took it meekly and mildly? Is it the same One? The same Jesus. Well, why didn't He do on Friday what He had done on Monday? Why didn't He scatter them on Friday as He scattered them on Monday?

Let me ask the question the other way, why wasn't He meek and mild on Monday as He was on Friday? Why did He look at them in a way that put terror into their souls and caused them to run? Whereas on Friday He meekly bowed his head and took it all.

Why did He speak with authority on Monday and give the orders, and on Friday meekly submit without a word and without a murmur? On Friday He was buried. On Monday He was striking. On Friday He was the anvil receiving the stroke, on Monday He was the hammer giving the stroke. And as those who follow the example of Jesus, you and I need to learn to fill both roles, to do both jobs, to give both demonstrations.

For all your days prepare,
And beat them ever alike.
When you are the anvil bear,
When you are the hammer, strike.

The remnant are going to learn over these experiences as no other group in all the history of the world. We must learn to bear as Jesus bore, and we must learn to strike as He struck. The temple is to be cleansed again. And there are things to be enacted in connection with the cleansing of the temple that hardly anybody is looking for, friends. And when insulted Deity speaks once again and speaks this time through human nature, there will be many ready to criticize, ready to find fault, ready to question the spirit of it all. They will say, "Is this the meek and mild Jesus?"

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" Malachi 4:5.

My dear friends, unless He comes, Malachi says there is going to be a curse, and that curse is coming. And parents and children read what it says there. The only thing that can turn the hearts of parents to children and children to parents in this awful

generation is the striking message of Elijah. And the striking work of Elijah. But those same people who give that striking message of Elijah and do that striking work of Elijah, are going to be like Christ led as lambs to the slaughter. Before the tribunals of this earth, and before angry mobs, the remnant will suffer abuse such as Christ suffered and they will respond as He responded. They will be meek. They will loving. No angry retort will be given. They will take it.

How can it be, my dear friends, how can it be up that the same individuals will be at once so strong and yet so meek? So full authority and yet so yielding to abuse? Ah, my dear Friends, it takes steel in the anvil to bear and it takes steel in the hammer to strike. Am I right?

For all your days prepare,
And beat them ever alike.
When you are the anvil bear,
When you are the hammer, strike.

I hope every parent will learn this here tonight. I hope every teacher will learn it. I hope every church officer will learn it. I hope everybody will learn it, friends. A failure to discern the need of both these roles causes people sometimes to become confused in their duty and critical of others as they discharge their duty. Was Jesus doing the right thing when He ordered those desecrators of a temple out of His father's house? Was He? Yes, my dear Friends. He was doing the Father's will when from those same people He willingly accepted all the abuse they put upon him. I wonder, dear friends, if one of the reasons that they treated Him so mean on Friday morning was because of their vivid memory of the way He had treated them Monday morning?

I wonder if it was rankling in their breath all that week? And I wonder if many a time as they came there and spit in His face and hit Him, they didn't with a devilish grin recall how He had driven them out of the temple just a few days before. I wonder if they didn't throw it in His face and dare Him to do anything about it? Did that make Him wish that He hadn't cleansed the temple? Watch this point, did that make Him say, "Well, men, maybe I did act a little too strong last Monday. Maybe I did go a little too far. Maybe I did reign you up a little too tight. Maybe I was a little strict. Maybe I should have been more gentle and lenient with you."

Did He say anything like that? Did he think anything like that? We have come to an hour, my dear friends, in the history of this world when if a man of God in the church or in the home or in the school dares to raise His voice in rebuke of sin, if he dares to do it, he is supposed to somewhere along the line, if not at the time, later to apologize of this point. He is supposed to do that.

Do you know what I mean? Oh yes. It is unpopular to rebuke sin. And if parents are to get their children away from sin the smart thing and the bright thing and the wise

thing and popular thing is not to rebuke it, that might arouse animosity and antagonism and even retaliation. No, the smart thing is just to think and plan and plot to get the children interested in something else. Divert their minds from their devilry. But never rebuke them. That is the smart thing.

The Devil laughs at all that, my friends. It is Elijah that is going to knit together the hearts of parents and children. And never think that to be meek and mild like Jesus means that parents and teachers are to meekly submit to the ways of perverse children.

The Spirit of Prophecy says the idea that we must submit to the ways of perverse children is a mistake. Read those first 150 pages in Volume 5. See the controversy that was waged and that raged back and forth in Battle Creek, the headquarters of our church, and in our first and that time our only college over this very question. Why was Professor Bell literally kicked down the stairs of Battle Creek college by the son of the principal of the college? And why was he forced to resign by men who should have stood by him? Because he dared to enforce law and order. Because he stood for high standards. Because he stood for reform. And there were other men on the faculty meek and mild that took the side of the children and criticized Professor Bell because they said he was too strict, too stern, too hard.

Ah, friends, it takes a hard hammer to accomplish something. Throw putty at this anvil all day long and what will you accomplish?

Now, friends, I want you to look at something else because if you have ever been around a blacksmith shop, and how I used to love when I was a boy to pause and watch the blacksmith as he would shoe horses, or mules, or do other things. How many of you ever saw a blacksmith work? May I see your hands? Well, there are some people that have seen it. It is getting to be a rare thing. But they are still some doing it.

But I asked them to get me a horseshoe, and here it is. And do you see the way that has been bent? Do you know how that happened? Well, that was put in the forge and a current of air was put through those coals until they became red hot, white hot, and this steel was put in there until it got red hot. And then the blacksmith put this on the anvil, and he beat it out there on the anvil and shaped it here and here. Beating. That is the way he did it.

The blacksmith is not interested in just beating the anvil with the hammer to hear music. Oh no. This is not the anvil chorus. And he is not interested, watch the point, in beating the anvil just to beat the anvil. There is something on the anvil that needs to be beaten.

Well, somebody might say, "Why an anvil? Why not beat the thing that needs beating?"

All right. Let's try it. Now just how much would I shape that? I could hit ever so hard with this hammer, but what have I got on the other side? Air. And that is not hard enough. So it takes a hard anvil and a hard hammer and something in between that has to be shaped that constitutes the blacksmith's work. And, my dear friends, if you get beaten, you may be the thing that needs to be shaped, you may simply be the person that is underneath helping to take the force of the blow, but if you are that latter, may I plead with you, don't be putty for you spoil the whole force of the thing. Remember, it takes a hard hammer and a hard anvil to accomplish anything with what is being shaped. And God is trying to shape a lot of things today.

For all your days prepare,
And beat them ever alike.
When you are the anvil bear,
When you are the hammer, strike.

That's it. And you are one or the other, my brother, all day long. One or the other all day long. Either receiving orders, or giving orders. You are either acting in authority to give directions and reproof and rebuke, or you are under authority receiving orders and sometimes reproof and rebuke.

And please don't get confused about it. When you are the anvil, bear, and when you are the hammer, strike. Don't rise up when you are the anvil. Just take it. That is all the anvil has to do. But don't hold back when you are the hammer. Hit it, and hit it hard. That doesn't mean being mean. That doesn't mean raising your voice. It just means attacking the situation and meeting it as Jesus met that condition in the temple that Monday morning. Oh, for parents that will do it, my friends! Oh, for teachers that will do it! Oh, for church officers that will do it!

But remember, if you do, you may be spit upon. You may be mocked. You may be insulted. And if God allows it, and the time has come for you to be thus treated, do not let it cross your spirits. Do not let it cause you to wilt. Look upon Jesus and let the mystery of His love and the melting influence of His meekness inspire in you a determination to take it as the anvil takes blow after blow after blow.

I have mentioned that it is very hard in the time in which we live for anybody that is trying to carry out God's plan in the home, or the school, or the church, and exercise authority to do it. Most people expect them to be anvils. Few people appreciate hammers. It would do us a lot of good if we could be transported for a few days or weeks back to the wilderness at Mount Sinai and mingle with the children of Israel there at the base of the mountain. We would see two million people camped in order working in order, worshiping in order, and all under authority.

I want to read something interesting from the commentary. Listen carefully:

“The Lord loves to see His work done as perfectly as possible. In the wilderness, the Israelites had to learn to accomplish with exactness and promptness the work connected with the order of the camp and especially the work of the tabernacle, its ornaments, and its service. All had to learn before they could accomplish this, to them new work. They had to be trained before they could do it as God desired” *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Volume 1, page 1108.

Now listen carefully to this next sentence. What do you make of it?

“There were men there ready to give counsel and advice and to meddle with the work of mounting and dismounting the tabernacle; and those who neglected their special work to meddle with the work of others, thinking they had special wisdom and knew how it should be done, were put to death”
Ibid.

I wonder if there is anybody here tonight that would lose his life if you would get back there? This seems awful, doesn't it, friends? It was awful. It is awful to meddle with the work of others. It is going on all the time, friends. One of the greatest problems administrators have, one of the great problems Moses had, but God handled the thing under the theocracy. And oh, my friends, it is possible with sanctimonious piety to be tinkering around, going all around the grounds, literally or figuratively knowing what other people ought to do, sometimes telling them how to do it, more often, telling somebody else how it ought to be done.

Listen carefully while I read:

“There were men there ready to give counsel and advice and to meddle with the work of mounting and dismounting the tabernacle; and those who neglected their special work to meddle with the work of others, thinking they had special wisdom and knew how it should be done, were put to death”
Ibid.

And if that seems cruel, friends, remember that not to have done it would have been more cruel. Oh, friends, I pray God that He will help us to learn the lesson. If you are the anvil bear, and if you are the hammer strike. But be sure you are the hammer. And if you are then strike. You may be spit upon. You may be mocked, but you take it meekly if you have done your duty in the fear of God.

May I read the next paragraph? Listen:

“This is the discipline which the Lord anciently gave to His people, and it is the discipline which should exist in our missions, our colleges, our publishing houses, our sanitariums” *Ibid.*

Ah, my dear friends, suppose we have got a surgery here. And here is the man that has been trained for that, and he has been given the authority to do that, and he is in there. He is opening up the human body to take out this organ or that organ. And here somebody comes along and says, “I wonder if that fellow is doing his job right? I think I will go in and see.”

“Who are you?”

“Oh, I am a farmer.” or “I am a bookkeeper.” I am the preacher.” or “I am the teacher.” “I think I will go in and see if the surgeon is doing his job alright.”

So he goes in. “You know, I don’t like the way he does that. To tell you the truth, I don’t think it needs doing.” And so on and on. And if I would actually get in there and pull instruments out of his hands, that would be something, wouldn’t it?

Somebody says, “Oh, nobody would do that.” Probably not, friends. But it is a done a dozen times a week in other departments by other people about other matters. It is the same principle.

I want to tell you something. The fact that a man is wise in one area is no evidence that he knows all about how to do something else. God gave certain men wisdom to deal with certain situations back there in the wilderness. And He appointed certain people to do this, and certain ones to do this, and certain ones to do that. And every man had his assigned position, and the strength of the movement was that each man did what he was supposed to do, and left it with God and Moses to see what others did what they were supposed to do. And before the end comes, the remnant will move in exact order like a company of soldiers. And if we learn that lesson, friends, there won’t be so many mimeographed sheets running around the country telling what is wrong with the leaders in Washington.

Neither will there be so many rumors and reports running around campuses of institutions wondering why this isn’t done and why somebody has had this difficulty, and why the leaders haven’t acted this way and that way about something else. We must learn, friends, when we are the anvil to what? Bear. And when we are the hammer? Strike.

And nobody, watch it, nobody is the anvil all the time. And still more important, nobody is the hammer all the time. And if anybody thinks he is the hammer all the time, God will see to it that he gets to be the anvil.

Any of you ever experience that? Yes. And remember, Jesus set us the example. He was the hammer on Monday, but He was the anvil on Friday. He gave a most wonderful demonstration of both. Oh, God help us to learn the lesson! What do you say, dear friends?

For all your days prepare,
And beat them ever alike.
When you are the anvil bear,
When you are the hammer, strike.

Now the Devil doesn't like what I am giving tonight, friends, because it is striking right at him and his efforts to bring confusion. And if the Devil has even half a chance to whisper in your soul, he will whisper something critical about what is being given tonight. Believe me, I know him, friends. And oh, I bring you back to Jesus. I bring you back to that blessed Lamb of God that suffered every abuse and scorn, and insult on Friday morning, but who a few days before gave that perfect example, that wonderful example of authority in action without apology, without the slightest weakening. This is what we need today, my friends.

People talk about blended meekness and authority. In a sense, that needs to be. But there are times, my friends, when it is the authority that shows up and needs to, and there are times when it is the meekness that shows up and needs to.

For all your days prepare,
And beat them ever alike.
When you are the anvil bear,
When you are the hammer, strike.

And if you are neither one in a given situation, please, don't get in the way. Please don't get in the way. Suppose that somebody sees me about to hit this, and he feels so sorry for this, and so he just puts his hand in there just as the hammer is about to descend and pulls it out. What could happen? I am not going to show you what could happen. No. You have heard of the carpenter hitting the wrong nail, haven't you? Yes.

Do you know that is what happened to Uzzah? He put forth his hand to the ark of God. He was afraid something was going to happen that shouldn't happen. And there is many a man today, well-meaning, that rushes in between the reprovee and the reprover, and merely gets in the line of fire. Brother and sister, don't dare to do it. The arrows of God are on the way.

Let me read you something about it. This speaks about those who are offended when straight truths are taught.

"They are self-condemned and feel that subjects have been

purposely selected to touch their case” *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 1, page 548.

Now it is alright to feel that God has arranged a subject because you needed it, but if you get offended at the preacher or the teacher and think, “Oh my, I guess he is just hitting at me,” then you read Volume One page 548. It was written before every preacher and teacher was born. But it is right on the point.

“If these will crucify fleshly lusts which war against the soul, they will get out of the way, where the arrows of truth will pass harmlessly by them. But while they indulge lustful appetite, and thus cherish their idols, they make themselves a mark for the arrows of truth to hit, and if truth is spoken at all, they must be wounded” *Ibid*.

Yes, brother, if you get in the line of fire, you may get hurt. Stay out of the line of fire when God is dealing with some soul. Don’t be too quick to go around and say, “Poor Mike, they are abusing you aren’t they? They are kind of hard on you. They are too strict with you, brother. They reign you up too much. The rules are too strict. They don’t pay you enough, either. And they don’t appreciate you.” Just keep that up, my friends, and the hammer will come and your fingers and more than your fingers will get wounded, and then you will get offended and begin to criticize and be ready to spit in the face of the one that Jesus used to do the work.

Remember, friends, the men that spit in His face on Friday had been greatly offended on Monday by the authoritative reproof of Jesus Christ. All those scenes are to be reenacted and sooner than we realize. We are training, either to be with Jesus, or with His opposers. We are training to act our part as anvils and hammers, or else we are training like those priests and like the mob to crucify the Lord of glory afresh in the person of His saints.

Oh, I pray, dear friends, if there is a heart here that has been wounded tonight, that you will fall on the Rock and be broken. May we pray?

Dear Lord, for Jesus’ sake, make these things real to our hearts. Oh, God, help us in this time of abounding iniquity, this time of sinful compromise in the home, in the church, and everywhere, help us to learn how to give the trumpet a certain sound. Help us not in any human power, or in any human rage or indignation, but in the divine power of Jesus to lift the standard and give the straight testimony. And we pray that Thou wilt help us when the reaction rises, when the storm descends, when the abuse comes in like a mighty flood, that like Jesus, we shall know the strength of submission, as well as the strength of rebuke. We pray it in His sweet name, Amen.

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