

Peace and Trust in Adversity

#1055

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 7, 1957

[Singing]

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” Isaiah 26:3.

“We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers” *Steps to Christ*, page 86.

I’m sure, dear friends, that this is an experience, like much of the Christian life, that is a gradual one. We may have certain times along the way when with sudden moving of the Spirit of God, we seem to be borne upward all at once, as in an elevator. But much of the Christian life is a gradual experience climbing up the mountainside, now and then coming to some vantage point from which we view. Oh, what a glorious vision as the spiritual elevation increases!

I’m sure that this experience that I want to study with you tonight is one that many here, perhaps nearly all, I hope all, have tasted something of. Yet, dear friends, I think there is a deeper experience in this matter of peace and rest and joy in the Lord than any of us have yet had. The things I am sharing with you tonight, I bring out of the Word of God and out of my own experience.

I don’t know that I have ever had quite so many strenuous days packed so closely together as in recent weeks and months, but I can testify that there is a way to have peace and rest, dear friends, that is refreshing. I thank the Lord that it is found in this song—the song that we just listened to. It’s in utter resignation to the will of God and a simple trust that God is getting His will done. In other words, it is accepting what God sends from hour to hour and from moment to moment, walking in the path of His providence. So, I want to share some things with you along those lines. I believe, dear friends, that as children of the King, it is our privilege to be supremely happy. We have, oh, so much to be thankful.

May I read this little sentence again, and then read you the setting to it.

“We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers” *Ibid.*

I believe that many even in the Christian experience go through weary years of struggle. Now I know it is necessary for us to struggle with sin, the world, the flesh, and the Devil. I understand that. But do I believe, dear friends, that it is our privilege to cease struggling with God. I think that’s our privilege. So many are struggling with God; a bit afraid of God—a bit anxious lest God should fail to

remember something, and fail to get something done for them. Or perhaps afraid that God will do something. But this speaks of enjoying a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers. I'm going to read the setting for this:

“God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created...”

He does what? He cares for everything that He has created. Has He created you? Yes. That's why we're keeping the Sabbath that's soon coming on—we believe that He created us, that He's our Creator.

“God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear” *Ibid.*

Listen friends. Do you hear the birds out there? Yes. What are they doing?

Do you know what a man told me yesterday? He told me a proverb that he had heard over in the old country. “If the birds knew how poor they were, they wouldn't sing.”

[Laughter from the audience]

Well, I would like to change that, friends. If we knew how rich we *are*, we would sing like the birds. What do you say?

[Audience] Amen!

That's right, amen is the word. God is caring for them. They have something to sing about.

“He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear...”

That's right Brother Provence. That's for you and me. Isn't it?

“...When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark. If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or

small, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, or overwhelmed by their weight. We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers” *Steps to Christ*, page 86

That’s it. That’s it.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” Isaiah 26:3.

Is God really running things, friends? “Ah but,” somebody says, “but you just don’t know what I’m in.”

You remember when the men came back from Egypt to tell their father, Jacob, that Simeon had been put into prison. There was a man down there in Egypt, who took hold of Simeon and put him in prison. That man said that unless they brought the younger man, Benjamin, back, they couldn’t have any more grain. Do you remember what Jacob said?

“Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away from me. All these things are *against* me.” You remember that, don’t you.

Jacob had not gotten hold of this thing yet. Jacob was a great struggler. Even though years before he had fought that battle at the brook Jabbok and had gotten the name Israel (prince with God) and even though that represented a great experience, friends, he still had some things to learn.

You may be able to look back and see where you have wrestled with God and gotten the victory over sin, but oh friends, that we may learn the sweet lesson we are studying tonight.

Jacob finally learned it. He learned that all those things were not against him at all. He learned what the apostle learned in Romans 8:28, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.”

Do you love Him? “Well, I’m trying anyway.” All right. Then God is working all things together for you. This says that He’s caring for the birds and for the great worlds and stars. He’s doing it all through love.

If we will believe that He is watching everything and noticing everything and controlling everything, we will dismiss these anxieties, and we will have a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers. What do you say we have it right now, friends? What do you say?

I am so glad we do not have to wait until the hay gets in, until the house gets painted, or until the treatment room gets finished. No. We don’t have to wait for any of these things to have peace and rest.

We don't have to wait until we get out of debt personally or as a family, or any other way. We don't have to wait until somebody who has said something bad about us comes and puts out his hand and says, "Brother, forgive me. I didn't say what I should have. I want you to forgive me." We do not have to wait on anybody or anything.

Right now we can believe two things: that God is looking after us, and we like it; that God is able and willing to carry out His will, and that is what we want.

Sweet will of God, still fold me closer,
Till I am wholly lost in Thee;
Shut in with Thee, Oh Lord, forever,
My wayward feet no more to roam;
What power from Thee my soul can sever,
The center of God's will, my home.

You know dear friends, I have been a willful man. I was a willful boy—stubborn. I wanted my own way. That leads to restlessness, when we don't get our way. We can never get our way in this world. There are too many people in the road.

You have found that out, haven't you? Maybe you have sometimes done what I have done, gotten down and prayed that God would either change the people who are in the road or remove them. Oh, I don't mean kill them or anything like that necessarily. But just get them out of the way so that what I want can be done.

There is an advance step along the road in that. If we are really selfish and not converted at all, and yet pray, we are probably praying for selfish and even wicked things. There have been men who have prayed that they would win in gambling, or that the horse they bet on at the races come in. And they are ready to bless God if it happens, and just as ready to curse Him if it doesn't. There are people who have just that idea, but I am not talking about that.

Somewhere along the line, friends, our selfishness gets to be more refined, more cultured, and a bit more religious. When we reach that point, the thing we pray about is that our idea of what God's will is shall get done. That's it.

In other words, I have made up my mind that so and so ought to be the church Elder. So I'm praying day by day, "Lord, see to it that Brother Jones is put in as Elder. And don't let Brother Smith get in because Brother Smith is worldly and the Devil is liable to use him if he gets in. Please get Brother Jones in and do not get Brother Smith in."

A person can get very restless about that. Especially when Brother Jones doesn't get in and Brother Smith does.

Another way a person can get restless along those lines, is when we set our hearts on what we believe to be the Lord's will for ourselves. I feel that I should be in a certain place or doing a certain thing. But it looks like somebody or some certain

set of circumstances is in the road. I can pray and wrestle about that, and the uncertainty of it can make a person quite tense.

My dear friends, God wants us to commit to Him not only our sins, not only our selfish desire for our own way in a wicked sense. He wants us to commit to Him our desires and purposes and plans and hopes about His work here on this earth. And then along with it, He wants us to believe that He is going to do it.

You say, "Well, what is the purpose of prayer than?" The purpose of prayer is to arrive at that point, my friends. And the very fact that so few arrive at it proves that there is plenty of need for more praying.

The purpose of prayer is *not* to get God to do your way. Oh no! Heaven help us. The purpose of prayer is not to remind God of something He forgot or apprise Him of something that He is ignorant of. The purpose of prayer is not to make God more interested in us or His work, or to make Him more enthusiastic about getting it done. No.

The purpose of prayer is to get you and me to the place where in our inmost hearts we are settled on two things, that all we want is God's will, and we are sure He is going to get it done. We tell Him so, and it makes us happy, and it makes Him happy. Then prayer has accomplished its purpose.

My stubborn will at last is yielded.
I would be Thine and Thine alone;
And this is the prayer my lips are bringing:
Lord, let in me Thy will be done.

"Human nature is ever struggling for expression..."
Mount of Blessing, page 15.

Is it? Oh yes!

"Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest..." *Ibid.*

You know, dear friends, we can express that trait of character just as much in arguing about the mark of the beast as we can about politics. We can express it in arguing about health reform or dress reform just as easily as we can about the mark of the beast, too. You know that, don't you?

"Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest..." *Ibid.*

Peter was. He wanted to fight, but he wanted to fight for whom? For Jesus. He had a sword, and he was using it. For whom? For Jesus.

Did it make Peter happy? No. It made him very unhappy and frustrated and disappointed because Jesus didn't seem to appreciate it. In fact, Jesus even had the audacity to say, "Peter, put up that sword."

“But Lord, don’t you know I am using it for you? I am not using it *against* you. I am using it *for* you.”

Jesus said, “I know, but that isn’t the way we do things.”

Peter didn’t understand although Jesus had been trying to tell him for three and a half years. “Why Peter,” He said, “don’t you know I could pray to My Father and He would have 12 legions of angels right here to take care of me, but how then should the Scripture be fulfilled? The cup my Father has given me to drink, shall I not drink it?”

Did the Father give Jesus that cup to drink? Did the Father have anything to do with that mob coming out there and binding Jesus? It was all in the prearranged order of things.

Not that those people had to do it. Oh, no. It was wrong for them to do it. But Jesus was receiving exactly what the Father had allowed and arranged. Is that correct?

Peter didn’t understand that. He thought he had to stop all that by fighting. It made him so restless. When Jesus reproved him, then he didn’t know what to do. He was miserable. Before long, he was cursing and searing and denying that he did not know the Lord.

In a way he told the truth. He didn’t know Him. Thank God he got acquainted with Him in the next few hours and days, and knew Him from then on. Peter never used a sword again. He never even raised his hand to strike anybody. He learned this lesson:

“Human nature is ever struggling for contest, but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice. But we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour”

Mount of Blessing, page 30.

Where is the highest place? At the feet of Jesus. And we feel that way if we learn this lesson. We look to Jesus, waiting for His hand to lead, listening for His voice to guide.

Brethren, it’s a real experience. It’s ours. We can have it if we are willing to give up our way, even in the Lord’s work. If we are willing to have God direct in what committees vote whether it suits us or not because we believe that God is working out His purpose.

Somebody says, "Do you think everything a committee votes is inspired and infallible?" No, not at all. Any more than that mob coming and binding Jesus was inspired.

But nevertheless, under the circumstances, it was the plan of God for Jesus. That's why He said to Peter, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Who gave Him the cup? The Father. That's why, friends, He stood there and meekly let them bind Him. They were not very kind or considerate about it either.

That was just the beginning. You remember how they took Him in, and He went through trial after trial, test after test. Turn to Isaiah 50. I want you to get a picture of what they did to Jesus and His attitude. We often read Isaiah 50:4. I am going to read it, and I am going to read the next two verses. They follow right on:

"The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned,
that I should know how to speak a word in season to him
that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He
wakeneth mine ear to hear as the Learned. The Lord
God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious,
neither turned away back. I gave My back to the
smiters..." Isaiah 50:4-6.

What happened to Him that night, friends? They terribly beat His back twice with that awful scourge, with those pieces of metal braided into leather strips. With every stroke, the blood ran down His back. Twice they went through that. What was His attitude? "I gave my back to the smiters." Yes. He said, "If it is time for Me to be whipped, all right, I'll be whipped." He didn't fight back. He did not run away. It was time to be whipped. How did He know it? Ah my friends, He was working on the Father's schedule.

Could there be a whipping on the Father's schedule? Might there be a whipping for you? And might it come from somebody's tongue instead of a scourge? It might hurt your ears worse than a whip would hurt your back. You can take the same attitude. But oh, let me read on:

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that
plucked off the hair..." Isaiah 50:6.

Did they really come up to Jesus and look in that dear face and start pulling off those hairs? That's sensitive you know, friends. Did those wicked men, inspired of the Devil actually come up there and take some of the hairs of His beard and pull them out? That hurt, didn't it? But what was His attitude? Oh, He didn't fight, friends. He didn't frown. He didn't scowl. He didn't scold. "I gave my back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair."

Why did He do that? Because this lesson was settled in His heart. He was carrying out the Father's will, and He knew that the Father was handling things. So He said, "Father, if this is the time to have the hair plucked out, here I am, Father." Like Isaac at Mount Moriah, He placed Himself upon the altar.

My dear friend, that is what God wants you to do every day, every hour in the little things. God knows we have to learn it in the little things before we can take the big things.

Oh friends, we imagine, I suppose that we could go through this coming crisis when we are brought before the courts or meet the howling mobs. But I'll tell you, friends. But if we cannot stand somebody burning the toast at breakfast time without scowling or it interfering with our digestion, we are not ready for the mob. And if we come home and find somebody has been sleeping in our bed while we were away, and we don't like it, and we either bawl somebody out or feel we would like to, we are not ready for the mob, friends. We are several miles yet from Gethsemane. Aren't we? Yes. Now I don't know if there is a soul here who has had any of those particular things that I've mentioned. If I happened to hit it, it was all unpremeditated. But listen, there are a hundred other things just like that going on.

Somebody says, "Yes that is the trouble. There are a hundred [things going around], and I think the time has come when that kind of thing ought to stop."

But did you know, friends, if that thing were to stop today, and you still feel that kind of reaction to it, the Lord would have to move you right away to a place where things *did* happen like that? That's right. The reason you are not in Heaven is because you would not be happy in Heaven if you talk and act and think that way. You couldn't be happy in Heaven.

"Oh," you say, "that's where I could be happy.

No. You say, "Well, how do I know?" Because I know where all this restlessness and envy and jealousy and dissatisfaction started.

It started in Heaven.

"In Heaven?"

Yes, it did. It started in a heart that had absolutely no excuse let alone reason. There was nobody bothering him, nobody irritating him, nobody doing the slightest thing to perplex him or annoy him. That's where it all started. So you and I will have to get clear past *all* that before we can be happy in Heaven.

God, in His mercy, is letting us face these daily tests, these petty annoyances, these disappointments. He is letting us be grieved with some of the same things that grieve Him. but He wants us to learn to relate ourselves to those things as He does, not by being frustrated or irritated or restless, but by looking up to God and saying, "Dear Lord, I know that through it all and in it all, You are working out Your will. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."

Oh friends, I want that! Don't you? We can have it. Let's have it right now. What do you say? Let's give over all these criticisms, these faultfindings. Let me read you this:

“If we lack faith were we are when difficulties present themselves we would lack faith in any place...”

Isn't that just what I said about going to Heaven?

“Our greatest need is faith in God. When we look on the dark side, we lose our hold on the Lord God of Israel. As the heart is opened to fears and conjectures, the path of progress is hedged up by unbelief. Let us never feel that God has forsaken His work.

Now listen. Oh Listen everyone. Don't miss this:

There must be less talking unbelief, less imagining that this one and that one is hedging up the way...”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7, page 211.

You know, it's too bad to be the kind of newspaper or radio announcer that when somebody comes around, we have something to report of a dark or doleful or critical nature. And do you know, friends, it's possible to do that and feel we are doing God's service? It is possible to feel that we have to let somebody know all the dark, doleful, discouraging things for fear that perhaps they do not know enough already. I know that there are times when things have to be dealt with, and Jesus tells us in Matthew 18 just how to deal with them. Doesn't He? Yes. That's not my subject. There is a way to deal with it. But oh friends, this says that there should be less talking unbelief, less imagining that this one and that one is hedging up the way.

I will never forget the night that one of my dear friends 25 years ago, spent the night in prayer over something we were deeply burdened about in the work of God. We started in that evening praying. It was one of those times that I was telling you about at the beginning my study when I thought that surely, somebody was in the road. We were praying that God would either change this person's heart or remove him. But you know, thank God, that night we prayed long enough that we found out a change needed to be made right in here [Perhaps Elder Frazee is pointing at his heart], and we lost all desire to have that other person removed.

“There must be less talking unbelief, less imagining that this one and that one is hedging up the way...” *Ibid.*

Oh friends, if there is anything I feel sorry for, it's to see dear hearts perplexed and burdened under their own criticisms and faultfindings. They are suspicious of that one. This one, you can't trust him.

“More love is needed, more frankness, less suspicion, less evil thinking. We need to be less ready to blame and accuse. It is this that is so offensive to God. The heart needs to be softened and subdued by love...” *Ibid.*

Oh, let's open our hearts and have it. What do you say, friends?

“The many problems that are now mysterious you may solve for yourselves by continued trust in God...”

Ibid., page 212

Isn't that wonderful? The problems can be solved, brethren, if you just commit them to God. Say, “All right, Lord. Now I'm ready; ready for anything.” But listen, when you do that, do not be surprised if God lets something happen that is not what you would chose. You've chosen His way. Jesus said, “I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” If you get down and have an earnest season of prayer, and tell God you are willing to take anything, and you get up from prayer and go outside and the first thing that happens is that somebody spits in your face, what would you think? Would you think God heard your prayer? Maybe that's why it happened. Maybe that's the time. Maybe the time has come.

Do you think we will ever have that experience? Oh, we look forward to it in the future, and if you look at anything far enough in the future, the most serious trial, the hardest thing takes on a kind of glamour. It's the same thing if you put it far enough in the past. We read about the trials of the martyrs, you know, and oh, that's wonderful. The experience during the time of trouble, that's wonderful. But to have somebody now even look a little like perhaps they don't like us around, it spoil our peace.

Oh, is God looking after us? Why those birds are still singing. Is God looking after them? Yes. Are there hawks around? But bless the Lord, they are not waiting until all the hawks are dead to start singing. No, they are not. And they are not waiting until they have rations stored ahead for six weeks. Tonight they're singing [In the background, you can hear some whistles from birds.] Sweet will of God, still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in Thee.

Well dear friends, I'm sure of this. It is something we can talk about, like eating strawberries, but it is something each person must taste for himself.

You remember in that dream Sister White had years ago, she and her husband were walking along to a place, and they were both just weak and worn and depressed and distressed, sick and worn out. God knew that the dear folks were many times. Well in the dream, that's the way they were in the dream.

As they were going along, they came to a stream, and Elder White plunged into that stream. There was a spring down in there. He came up with a glass and he was drinking from a glass of that water. He plunged down again and got some and came up and was drinking it. Sister White said he looked radiant and buoyant, and full of health and vitality.

In the dream, she wondered why he didn't give her some. You know what he said? “All who drink this must plunge for themselves.”

That's it, friends. Oh, you may wish somebody would give you a drink of that water, that somebody would pour that peace into your soul. I say to you, you must settle two things in your heart: that God loves you enough to take care of you, and it

suits you to have Him do it. That includes God letting bad things happen to you, hard things happen to you, cruel things happen to you, disappointing things happen to you. It's all part of God's plan for you, and you like it. Not that you like those hard things or those bad thing, but you like for God to do it because you know He loves you better than you love yourself and you know that He does not allow one bit of it unless it is for your good.

So you say, "Lord, if it is time for the whipping, I am here for the whipping. If it is time for the spitting, I am here to be spit upon. If it is time to have the hairs plucked out, it's all right. And when we settle that, all these petty annoyances, all these irritations, will fade away like the mist before the morning sun, my friends.

Look upon Jesus. Look upon that dear face wounded and marred and bruised for us. See that peace. Ah friends, on that night of that awful trial, there was more than one who came up there with a rude gleam, with a mocking sneer. But as they caught the look of that face they drew back. Some of them saw something more than the ordinary. God is looking for those today who will reveal that settled peace, that sweet love.

Dear one, you can never have it if you have any reserve. No, no. If you're a colonel in the army and you decide that you would be willing to be demoted to a captain, that isn't enough. No. To have what I am talking about tonight, you will have to be willing to have every bar taken off your shoulders, every stripe taken off your arms. Yes sir, even be willing to be kicked out of the army entirely with a dishonorable discharge as far as men are concerned. Do you see what I'm talking about? If you have any bottom place where you say, "Well, I'll go *that* far, but no lower, you had just as well resign yourself to restlessness because that is what you will have. Every time you fall, even if you do not fall as far as you were afraid of, you will be afraid you will get there next time.

But when you settle in your heart that there is no bottom, when you settle in your heart to be willing to be anything or nothing, when you settle in your heart that you don't have to have any position, any notice, anything the way you want, just that God shall have His way, why then, friends, the sweet peace of Christ will take your heart. And even your prayers can breathe peace.

Instead of praying, "Oh Lord, don't let them put me in that lion's den. Oh Lord, don't let them put me into that lion's den!" Keep me out of that lion's den. Lord, don't let the lions get at me." No, instead of praying like that, you will let Darius do that kind of worrying up in the palace. He can't sleep. But Daniel is asleep. Yes, there he is, lying there peacefully asleep. Why? Not, my friends, because he is sure no lion will eat him. No, no. That isn't the point at all. If that is what you think, you've *missed* the point. The reason Daniel is asleep is because he is perfectly willing to be eaten if it is God's time to have him eaten is here. That's why. If he is on the menu for the lions, he had just as soon be eaten asleep as awake. Sure.

Come down five hundred years later, read about it in Acts 12, there is Peter. He is in jail. Herod has taken James and killed him with the sword. Now he has Peter; he's next on the list. You know that James actually got his head taken off too. Peter could not say, "Well, the Lord delivered James. I'm sure He will deliver me."

No. Peter had to say, “The Lord let James’s head be taken off. Maybe mine is next.”

But Peter is what? He’s asleep. The sweet and blessed sleep of utter resignation to God’s will. Now the church was awake. They were praying. They’re praying hard. They’ve prayed all night. That’s all right. You know, that’s such an interesting picture, the church is praying and Peter is asleep. Who are they praying for? For Peter. Peter has what they are praying for. That’s the point. They needed to pray. They got the answer to their prayers. But Peter is there asleep, and the angel really had to work hard to get him to wake up. You remember that, don’t you?

Why some people, friends, even if they had gotten so weary through long tension and worry and anxiety that if they had dozed off and that angel had touched them, you know what they would have done. Why they would have just been so worried and nervous and anxious. But Peter awoke just as calmly as he went to sleep.

Oh friends, I want to learn that lesson! And bless God, I can say I am at least in kindergarten. It’s a sweet school. I don’t want anything else, friends. I don’t want any position. I am not looking for notice. I choose right here tonight that it isn’t my way. No, not my way even in God’s work. I’m willing, friends, for God to work out His way, the way He want it. You know, it’s amazing when we settle this thing, how much God lets us do, hour by hour. And also, how much He does without us having a thing to do with it.

[A song beautiful song that summarizes the message follows, “Sweet Will of God.”]

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