Reality and Righteousness

#0998

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 9, 1981

Thank the Lord for Jesus. The more we look at Him, the more we love Him, and the more we love Him, the more we want to look at Him. It'll be that way a million, million years from now, won't it? Thank God! As I sometimes tell folks, Heaven is so wonderful, and there'll never be any end of it, so the only way we can get more of it is to start sooner. Is there anybody here tonight that hasn't started? Let's start tonight. We have a wonderful opportunity, don't we? ... a wonderful opportunity. Sometimes as we meet people and get acquainted with them, we say, "How long have you been in the truth?" I wonder how many people here tonight have been in the truth 10 years or more. May I see your hands? Very well. How many have been in the truth for at least 20 years? May I see your hands? What about 40 years? Let's see the hands. Not so many but there are still some. What about 50 years? What about 60? We'll stop there; that's all right.

I wonder what it means to be "in the truth." Jesus said, "…I am the way, the truth, and the life…" John 14:6. To be "in the truth" then, means to be in Jesus' Is that right? In fact, we read of 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' *All* truth has its origin and source in Him. He does not say something after He has consulted some standard to find out whether it's true or not. He Himself is the *maker* of truth. He's the *author* of truth. He is the one from Whom all truth proceeds. So it is written that "…it is impossible for God to lie…" Hebrews 6:18. That's real security and trust in Him, isn't it? We never have to wonder then whether the testimony of Jesus is something to be depended on or not because He's the faithful and true Witness, as the book of Revelation presents Him.

I'd like to have you turn this evening to Revelation, the 14th chapter. We're going to take a look at some folks who bear His name, reflect His likeness, share His character. Revelation, the 14th chapter:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" Revelation 14:1.

Other translations put it, "His name and His Father's name" (*J.B. Philips New Testament*). Of course, they have the same name so it all adds up to the same. Where is it written, this name? [Audience responds: In their foreheads.] Right here in the forebrain, the seat of man's highest thoughts. Here the image of Jesus is to be impressed so *deeply* that it can never be lost, so *fully* that the reflection of that life is revealed to the onlookers. I want a part in that, don't you?

Now passing down to the fifth verse... Brother Cook, will you read that one for me?

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" Revelation 14:5.

No guile in their mouths. What is the opposite thought to the thought of guile? Truth, that's right. Guile is more than a straight lie. It has in it the idea of being wise in the attempt to deceive. It's scheming. And the remnant will not have that character.

Let's turn over to the book of Zephaniah, the 3rd chapter, and the 13th verse. Here's another picture of the same people. Brother Boykin, maybe you'll read that one for me:

"The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" Zephaniah 3:13.

There's a peace and security about the truth. Someone has smilingly noted that one good thing about telling the truth is that you don't have to remember what you said. It's wonderful to be so identified with truth that our whole effort is to have things presented as they *are* rather than to cover up, pretense, make-believe, or anything of that kind. Here it says that "the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth..." Now, it's the echo of this that we found in Revelation 14:5: "...In their mouth was found no guile..."

I'm impressed that there never was a time in all the history of the world when there was so much pretense, make-believe, cover-up, show-off, veneer as at the present time. The credibility gap gets wider and wider. In fact, it has become customary today to discount much of what comes to the people through the media, whether it's over the radio or TV or newspapers or magazines or whatever. But God's people are to be *distinguished* in this last hour by the fact that they speak the *truth* and never say anything else. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies..." They *speak* the truth because they *love* the truth. Those who receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved will be left to receive strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

Let's turn over to Zechariah, the 8th chapter, and the 16th verse:

"These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD" Zechariah 8:16–17.

"Speak... the truth..." Isn't it a wonderful thing to be around people who you know tell you the truth? You can count on it. I like to trade with people who I know won't misrepresent an object, don't you? And thank God, the Heavenly Merchantman, as He comes from door to door in Laodicea, is the faithful and true Witness. The gold that He presents has no dross. The white raiment is without spot. And the eye salve will give us discernment to know the true from the false, the truth from the fictitious.

In these days in which we live, those who *speak* the truth and *love* the truth will be peculiar. Much of what is going on in the world in the drug scene is concerned with awakening impressions, emotions, experiences that are fictitious. Much of what goes on in the religious scene is likewise—there are certain kinds of music, there are certain kinds of religious appeals—audiences are whipped up to a frenzy in excitement. *Exciting* has become quite a word today. Exciting it may be, but when all those things are *fictitious*, in part or in whole, oh what a relief it is to turn away from all those *unreal* things and find the *truth*, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: to love the law which is God's truth; to love the testimony which is the testimony of the true Witness; to love what Jesus says through His Word and through the Spirit of Prophecy.

Now, it requires earnest effort on our part because we are influenced by what's around us as well as our poor human natures. The Bible speaks of the righteous man as the one who swears to his own hurt and changeth not (see Psalm 15:4). Why does he do that? Because he's *true*—you can count on him; you can depend upon him. God wants us to be in that class.

In the book *Mount of Blessing*, page 68, I read this inspired comment:

"...No one who tries to appear what he is not... can be called truthful" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 68.

If I were to come in here tonight and give the impression that I was a millionaire as far as the money of *this* world is concerned, that wouldn't be truthful. If I'm a cigarette slave, but I want somebody to *think* that I have quit when I really have no intention, that's untruthful, isn't it? Suppose now, and then I go out and take a bit of whiskey, but I would be ashamed to have my friends know about it, so I do it on the sly. I want to leave the impression that I'm a sober man, a "temperance" man, but really, secretly, I have an idol in my heart. There are many other illustrations we can use.

Let me read it again:

"...No one who tries to appear what he is not... can be called truthful" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, Ibid.*

This is one of the *great* difficulties or problems that we meet in the world today and the tremendous use of the drama, the theatrical, which is all make-believe—putting on, showing off, somebody pretending to be somebody else. "Ah," it's said, "well,

everybody knows they're *not*." But *every* effort—don't miss this—every effort to try to *be* somebody else, whether it's *known* by your audience or whether it isn't, is developing a character which is just the opposite of loving the truth. The truth of the matter is, friends, that nobody *can* be somebody else. Every attempt to ape others, even if it isn't on the stage, even if it's in daily life. Sometimes youth are attracted by some individual, and they get to love that individual, and it's a good thing to love someone who is lovable and whose traits are amicable. But when it gets to the point to where an individual tries to *copy*, *imitate* somebody else, that is *losing* an element in his character of truth. Be yourselves, my dear friend, young or old. Never try to *be* somebody else because you *can't*. Impossible. God has made you somebody different from anybody else. "No one who tries to appear what he is not... can be called truthful."

Now, I've introduced these verses to raise this question: if no one can be called truthful who tries to appear what he is not, how—don't miss this—how can there be any honesty or truthfulness in claiming to be righteous in this wicked world with our sinful, fallen, human natures? Is that a good question to face? It's a good question to face just to *think* about it, but it's a very *practical* question, very practical.

Now, some people think that to be honest means to say something like this, "You know, I have a terrible temper. I lose my temper nearly every day."

"Well," you say, "isn't that honest, Brother Frazee?"

It's not righteousness by faith, I can tell you *that*. It's neither righteousness *nor* faith, is it?

"Well," somebody says, "but I do."

Do you?

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." Romans 1:16.

Let's look at it for a little. How can it be an *honest* thing for a man to claim victory, claim righteousness, in a fallen, sinful, human nature body? *That*'s the question. That's what the book of Romans is about, from start to finish, and many of the other books of the Bible deal with the problem. And tonight, dear friends, I'm *so* thankful that in a practical, down-to-earth way, we can look at this. And it's possible for a man to be honest, *perfectly* honest, recognize his own weakness, his own bent to sinning, and at the same time lay hold of the command and promise of God to be just what Heaven wants him to be. It all comes in this matter of *believing* the truth.

Now let's go to the book of Romans and notice an example that's given to us here. The fourth chapter of Romans, beginning with the first verse:

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" Romans 4:1–3.

Now let's look at that a minute. Abraham did what?

[Audience responds] Believed God.

Believed God, and it was what?

[Audience responds] Counted unto him...

Counted unto him for what?

[Audience responds] For righteousness.

For righteousness. God was *so pleased* with Abraham because he believed Him. Now you and I look at the record of Abraham and we think he made some mistakes. Did he make some mistakes?

[Audience responds] Yes.

Did he tell a lie? More than once. And he wasn't truthful then, was he. Do you think he carried that weakness, the expression of it, do you think he kept lying all his life? No, thank God. There was a power working in his life.

But let's take an example, now, of Abraham's belief in God that Paul uses this same chapter, the fourth chapter of Romans and verses 17–22. We'll just look at them as we go along. I want you to notice:

"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" Romans 4:17.

Now let's just look at this a minute. God told Abraham, I've made you what?

[Audience responds] A father of many nations.

A father of many nations. In fact, He changed his name in token of that. What had his name been?

[Audience responds] Abram.

Now it was what?

[Audience responds] Abraham.

And that means "father of a multitude."

You know, I've thought about it. Here comes some nomad wandering over the country. He sees this great encampment, and he says to one of the servants feeding cattle, "Whose cattle are these?"

"These are Abraham's."

Abraham—if they knew the language, they knew it meant *what*? Father of a *multitude*. And what would a stranger, learning that the man's name was Abraham, suppose? He'd suppose he had a *multitude* of children, wouldn't he? And lo and behold, he doesn't even have *Isaac* yet.

All right, let's read on:

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations..." Romans 4:18.

Now, when did he believe it: after it happened or before?

[Audience responds] Before.

All right, read on:

"...according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" Romans 4:18.

What was it that God showed Abraham, and he told Him, "So shall I seek thee"?\

[Audience responds] The stars.

The stars, *innumerable stars* there in the heavens. It says, "I'm going to make your seed like *that*." And Abraham did what? He *believed* it. *After* it happened?

[Audience responds] Before.

Before. And God said, "I like that. I'm pleased with that." It's a wonderful thing to believe God, isn't it?

All right, read on:

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" Romans 4:19–20.

Now just a minute. What was it that he *didn't* consider? He didn't consider his own body. Did God ever use that body to accomplish His promise? Yes, but that wasn't what Abraham was looking at. He was looking at *what*? The promise of God. That is *what*? That's *faith*.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" Hebrews 11:1.

And this all has a very practical bearing in righteousness, and that's why Paul's using it. He wants us to come to the place, my dear friends, where we will believe absolutely in what Jesus says, whether we feel it or not and whether it looks that way or not. Just believe it because He says so. Isn't that a good reason? Because God what?

[Audience responds] Cannot lie.

And notice the 17th verse. We've already read it but let me call your attention to it

"...God... quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were"

Romans 4:17.

Do you know why He does that, why He can do it? Because when He calls them, they *are*. *Impossible* for God to lie.

All right. Now read verses 21 and 22:

"And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" Romans 4:21–22.

Thank the Lord. What is God looking for then? God is looking for people like Abraham who will believe *anything* He says. Now, we may fall, as Abraham did, as we learn, but sooner or later, and I trust it'll be sooner, God wants to bring us to the place where *anything* He says, we say, "Amen." Do you know what "Amen" means? It means, "Yes, may it be so. That's all right."

Now Brother Cook, I want you to read for us the rest of the chapter, just three verses:

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" Romans 4:23–25.

Thank the Lord. Who was it written for?

[Audience responds] For us.

For *us.* Aren't you glad? Praise the name of the Lord, dear friends. God can do for us spiritually all that He did for Abraham spiritually and what He did for him physically. He can accomplish through us the impossible. That's what this message calls for. That's what the law of God calls for. And the Gospel "...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." Romans 1:16. Will it work for people that don't believe?

[Audience responds] No.

No, it won't. Isn't that an interesting thing?

Wouldn't it be a strange thing, friends, if the automobiles on this place, the only ones the automobiles would run for were people that believed the promises of God? Would *your* automobile start in the morning? We are so used to the *mechanical* and what we call the *scientific* that what we'd like to get hold of in religion is something that will work for anybody, but it *won't*, dear friends. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that *what*?

[Audience responds] Believeth.

Believeth. God is working miracles for those that do *what*? Believe. Believe *what*? Believe *anything He says*. If God makes a promise, they believe that He'll do it, right? If He gives a command, they know that God would not require something that was impossible, and so they go ahead and do it. It's just like that man at the pool of Bethesda to whom Jesus said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." (See John 5:8.) Instead of looking at the impossibility of the thing, he *did* it. Why? He put his will on the side of faith and action, and God gave the power.

Some evenings ago, I read you this wonderful statement. I'm going to read it again. It's from the *Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892:

"When Satan suggests doubt and darkness, begin to sing of the matchless love of Jesus" *Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892.

My brother was singing a little while ago, *Tell Me the Story of Jesus*. Did Jesus live the life here on earth that He wants *us* to live? Are there going to be some people who keep the commandments of God *and* the faith of Jesus? Yes.

"When Satan suggests doubt and darkness, begin to sing of the matchless love of Jesus... The light and love and power of God will rest upon you. Determine that through Jesus you will elevate the soul above all that is low and earthly, and let your conversation be full of hope and courage in the Lord. Say, 'I will be free, I am free...'" Review and Herald, September 20, 1892.

Determine. What does "determine" mean? Make up your mind, come to a decision. Those of you who were here when I read this, you'll remember I invited you to say it. It says to say it. Would you like to say it? "...I will be free, I am free..."

[Audience repeats with Elder Frazee] "...I will be free, I am free..."

Now let me tell you the difference, friends. If your problem is tobacco, you can say that, and yet you *expect* to be smoking a cigarette next week, either because you *want to* and don't intend to quit, or because you'd *like to* but don't have faith that God will help you. Then, friends, it's nonsense in words. It's sacrilegious to say this. Sure. It's like a man in prison saying, "I am free. Look at me. I'm in prison here, behind the bars, but I'm free." No, he *isn't* free. He's *not* free.

Then I come back to my question: if the *truth* means that we're not to give any impression to appear what we're not if *that's* what it means to be truthful, how can a man who's a cigarette slave say, "I am free. I will be free, I am free"? How can he do it? He can do it only by *faith in Jesus*. *That's* the only way he can do it.

When Jesus says that His name is Jesus, Savior, because He died to save us from our sins, and I desire to be delivered, and by faith, I claim His promise, then I know that He will keep His Word. Is that right? And that which would not be true—don't miss this—that which would not be true did I say it apart from Him becomes true when I say it trusting in His promise and believing in His Word, because God cannot lie. God cannot lie. This is righteousness by faith—to believe God enough to accept His promise to forgive our sins and write His law in our hearts to change us after the pattern of Christ.

Now somebody says, "Yes, but Brother Frazee, suppose that next Monday morning somebody does something that I just can't bear, and I'm about to lose my temper and tell them off. How can I say I am free? What do I do if my problem is tobacco, and I'm just seized with an irresistible longing for the cigarette?

What if my problem is lust and some impure picture comes before my imagination? And I say, "Oh, there I go again, I'm falling." Listen, friends. In all these and a hundred other matters, temptation is *not* sin. Do you know what to do? Let me read it to you, the little book, *Our High Calling*, page 85. Here is a sentence that I wouldn't take a million dollars for if I couldn't get another book. Listen:

"Do not for a moment acknowledge Satan's temptations as being in harmony with your own mind" *Our High Calling*, page 85.

You say, "How's that honest?" The question, friends, is *this*: if you've got two witnesses here and they disagree, you've got to decide which one you are going to believe. If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. It's a perfectly *honest* thing to accept God's word instead of mine. What do you say? It's a perfectly *truthful* thing to say, "I believe what Jesus says instead of believing the way I feel. I'm going to go by the compass, not by the weathervane. I'm going to believe what Jesus says because I know He can't lie. And Jesus says that this is right for me to do. He says He's forgiven my past failures. He says that He will keep me from falling. He says that "...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" 1 John 4:4. He says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" 1 John 5:4. I believe His promise, and therefore I put my will on the side of faith and action, of believing the side of victory."

And so when Satan comes and says, "Now wouldn't you like this wonderful confection to eat?" at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. You've had a good breakfast; you've had a good dinner, but here somebody comes along at 4 o'clock.

I've actually heard people, and you have, too. I've heard this, "Well, I know I shouldn't, but it looks so good, I think I will."

Is that victory?

[Audience responds] No.

That's what?

"Well," you say, Brother Frazee, do you think religion enters into things like that.

It better, hadn't it?

Somebody says, "Do you think we can eat our way into Heaven?"

No, but we can eat our way *out*. [Laughter] Didn't some people do that 6,000 years ago and got right out of Eden on the eating question, didn't they?

Oh friends, isn't it wonderful to be free? Isn't it wonderful to have *control* of the appetite instead of being a *slave* to appetite, whether the problem is alcohol, tobacco, drugs, eating between meals, or overeating, or whatever—you name it. It's a wonderful feeling, shall I say, more than a feeling, a wonderful satisfaction, a wonderful experience to know that in Christ we are delivered from yielding to every bodily impulse; that we can do what we know is the *right* thing, the *happy* thing, the *victorious* thing. The power is in Jesus.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Corinthians 15:57.

Now let me read this sentence again:

"Do not for a moment acknowledge Satan's temptations as being in harmony with your own mind" *Our High Calling*, page 85.

Let me tell you, friends, the man who *parleys* with temptation, whether it's appetite or lust or criticism or anything else, the man that *parleys* with it is in great danger of yielding. When I begin to admit that I would like to *do* the thing, I'm getting dangerously near that tree on which hangs the forbidden fruit. What should I do? At the *first* impression of the spirit, I should say, "No! No!" Resist the Devil and he will what?

[Audience responds] Flee from you.

Flee from you. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" James 4:8. "...Resist the Devil and he will flee from you" James 4:7. It comes back to this matter of believing God, you see. He knows what is best for me, and He will help me, and I want Him to do it.

And so, when Satan comes along with his wares and says, "Wouldn't you like some of this?" I say *what*?

[Audience responds] No.

"Oh, but wouldn't you?"

"Never mind! That is not the question, what my fleshly lusts might want. I don't want it. I don't choose it. I cannot break my Savior's heart. I cannot grieve my Lord. I cannot drive the nails in His hands again, repeating Calvary. I can't do it, can't do it. I don't want to do it because it would hurt Him."

"Do not for a moment acknowledge Satan's temptations as being in harmony with your own mind" *Ibid*.

And so my dear friends, honesty, *strict* honesty, when I've given my heart to God, is saying, "I'm through with that. I'm through with that." *Never* acknowledge yourself as a currently defeated individual. Let me repeat that. Never acknowledge yourself as a currently defeated individual. Never say, "Oh, I lose my temper all the time" or "I'm always telling some silly thing" or "I tend to be moody and gloomy." Oh, no. Leave that where it belongs—at the cross. Surrender it to Jesus. Ask that His precious blood shall not only *cover* you but *cleanse* you. Let's repeat 1 John 1:9:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

1 John 1:9.

Is He? Will He do it? Oh, I praise His name. Now that's one kind of confession

there in 1 John 1:9. That means *admitting* that we're wrong and asking God to take our sins away. But there's another use of that word 'confession' here in the book of Romans. Turn to Romans the 10th chapter please, verses 9 and 10. Here's a wonderful text:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" Romans 10:9–10.

This is *another* kind of confession. This is not simply confessing that *we're sinners*; it's confessing that *Jesus is righteous*. It's not simply telling how *bad* we are, it's telling how *good* He is. It's by faith *expressing* our acceptance of *His* forgiveness, *His* righteousness, and knowing that we are accepted in the Beloved.

Believe with *what*? Your heart, your mind, your will, your choice, and do *what*? Do something else, what is it?

[Audience responds] Confess.

What do you use for that?

[Audience responds] Your mouth.

Your mouth. Oh friends, I'm glad I have a mouth. Do *you* have one? What did God give it to you for? *Not* to echo the Devil's doubts. *Not* to share Satan's quibbles. *Not* to tell everybody what a failure you are all the time. Oh, no. That's not a good salesman for Christ. Leave your sins with Jesus at the cross. "If we confess our sins..." To *whom*? To Him. He is *what*?

[Audience responds] Faithful and just.

...to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then in believing we are to do *what*? What does this verse in Romans 10 say? Confess. With *what*?

[Audience responds] Our mouth.

Thank God! Tell of what Jesus is and what He has done. You see, dear ones, we're not saved because of what we've done. We're saved because of what He did. Aren't you glad? When Satan tempts you to look at your failures, let me finish reading this sentence I was reading from Review and Herald,

"...say, 'I will be free. I am free...' ...And when Satan tells you that you are a sinner, tell him, 'I know it, but Jesus said, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'" *Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892.

Yes, Satan says, "Oh, you're such a sinner."

"Yes, I know it, but Jesus came to call me to repentance."

Repentance is being sorry and being sorry enough for sin to quit it. Am I right? Will Jesus give me that gift? When will He give it to me?

[Audience responds] Now.

Right now.

[Elder Frazee begins singing "Down at the Cross," and the audience join him.]

Now is there somebody who would like to do what we've just read here—to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus? Come up. Come up. Let's have a good time together claiming the victory through Jesus our Lord, claiming His forgiveness and His cleansing and acceptance.

[Testimony service]

Our precious Lord, our hearts are all united in claiming the promises of Thy love. We thank Thee for the Savior who died for us, who lives for us, who lives to make intercession for us, and therefore is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. We've come, our Lord. We're meeting the conditions. We're asking, and we know Thou doest answer. We're knocking, and we know Thou dost open. We're seeking, and we know we find. And so, our Father, in Jesus' name, we leave our sins at the cross. We claim by faith the power of Christ to deliver us, to save us, to make us victorious through His name. We thank Thee, in His name Who died for us. Amen.

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