

More Precious Than Gold

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Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 20, 1964

The Bible is full of figures of speech: metaphors, similes and just about every other figure that could be thought of. God delights to appeal to our minds and hearts through every possible avenue. He says:

“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir” Isaiah 13:12.

Through all ages, gold has been considered to be one of the most valuable substances. In many countries, it has become the standard or the measure of value; we speak of the gold standard. But there's something that's more precious than gold to God. It's you, *you*.

“The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!” Lamentations 4:2.

The picture is that of the ancient custom of weighing gold or silver in exchange for something. Coins have not always been used as mediums of exchange. In some places, gold or silver *itself* was weighed in scales. And so much of a certain commodity or a certain thing called for so many ounces of silver or so many ounces of gold or whatever measure of weight was used. Two of the modern translations express the language of the prophet, speaking of the sons of Zion, “They are worth their weight in gold.” That would be something, wouldn't it?

Our good friend, John, was called to the army last week. Suppose that someone told the United States government, “We will pay you in gold pound for pound if you will just let us keep John. We need him for the work.” That would have been quite a bit of gold. Now you who are mathematically minded, just figure out how much that would cost. More than you and I have here tonight, you'll agree. But that's how much he's *worth* to God. That's how much you're worth to God.

You see the value of man as Heaven views it when you look at the cross. Calvary reveals Heaven's estimate of the value of one person. That's you.

But, my dear friends, the value was not *established* at Calvary. It was not the cross that *made* man so valuable. He was already that valuable. That's why the cross was provided; that's why the sacrifice was arranged; that's why the ransom was paid—the value was established not at Calvary, but at creation.

When God made man, He made him in His own image. And so we have that beautiful statement of inspiration that man is very dear to God because he was made in his own image. And while we are all made in the image of God, an infinite God

has seen fit to reveal different facets of His infinite character in the *individuality* of millions of people.

And since there is no one who is your duplicate, you are of infinite value to Heaven. You reflect the image of God as no one else ever has and as not another human being in this world can. God needs you. He wants you. He loves you. You are very precious to Him.

God needs you not only to love Him, to satisfy His heart longing, and to be loved by Him, for love seeks an object on which to bestow its affection, but He needs you to reveal His character and His love to others in a way that nobody else can. Yes, *you* can reveal the love of God as nobody else can. Will you do it? You are worth your weight in gold. Yes, far more.

“How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!”
Lamentations 4:1–2.

Ah, my friends, what a picture! Talk about devaluation, here it is. Gold! Something worth its weight in gold is brought down to the level of pottery—just common clay pottery made of mud. So the prophet weeps in these lamentations.

You will remember that hundreds of years before this time, God had spoken to Moses on the mountain and told him to build a sanctuary that He might dwell with His people. Beginning with the 25th chapter of Exodus, the explicit directions are given concerning the making of the different articles of furniture.

If you want to see something interesting, look in the 25th chapter of Exodus about the making of the furniture. Read chapter after chapter, and you’ll notice that all the furniture within the sanctuary itself was made of or overlaid with gold. Not only so, but when you come to the vessels, the basins and the bowls, and the other articles that were used with the table in the Holy Place, it’s expressly stated that they were all of gold. Gold.

Later, when Solomon's temple was built, *millions* upon *millions* of dollars of value went into the building of that temple. Inspiration speaks of it as the most beautiful and wonderful building that was ever built upon the face of the earth. And connected with the service of that temple were these beautiful objects—the Ark, the candlesticks, the tables, and these vessels, all of gold.

But there came a time when, because of the repeated and continued apostasy of God's people, those vessels of gold were all carried away to Babylon. Who tells about this? Daniel.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of

Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god” Daniel 1:1–2.

Those precious vessels finally came to be in a heathen house, the house of Baal, the great god of Babylon. What a tragedy. The golden vessels dedicated to the worship of God now captives in a heathen land, in a heathen temple. And there they stayed year after year.

But there came a night when the king of Babylon, the grandson of this man who took the vessels, Belshazzar, became intoxicated with wine, the wine of Babylon. He called for those vessels. He said, “Let's get those golden vessels that the Jews have dedicated to the service of their God, and let's drink wine out of them, tonight.” They'd been drinking, but now they drank the wine of Babylon from the golden vessels of the house of God. When that happened, God was through with Babylon. And the bloodless hand wrote the doom of that empire on the walls of that palace.

That which is dedicated and consecrated to God must not be used in the service of Satan, and in the service of Babylon, in the service of this world.

Who is worth their weight in gold? The precious sons of Zion. The boys and girls, the men and women, who have been made in the image of God and bought with the blood of Jesus, are worth their weight in gold. They are golden vessels dedicated to the service of the King of Heaven, to be used in the priestly work of the plan of salvation.

Tell me something, friends: Suppose you had been a priest in the days of Solomon or Jehoshaphat or Josiah. And there you are carrying on your ministry in the sanctuary in the temple, using these golden vessels at the table of shewbread. Suppose some Edomite or Moabite or Amalekite came along and said, “I'd like to borrow one of those golden vessels. I have a need for it over here in Edom or Moab or Ammon, and I'd like to borrow it.” What would you say? Would you lend it? Are you sure?

Suppose he says to you, “Well now I realize, of course, that I should pay something for it. During the time that I'm using this golden vessel that I'd like to borrow from the sanctuary, I'm willing to pay \$16 a day.” Would you lend it? Or would you say, “No, I think you'll have to raise that to \$25 a day to make it worthwhile.” What would you say?

Suppose he's very anxious to get that particular vessel, and suppose he offers a hundred dollars a day for the use of it. Suppose he says, “We're really putting on a big thing over in our capital, and if I could just have that golden vessel, it would be worth \$200 a day to me if I could just use it over there.”

Think of what we could do at Jerusalem with all that money. What would you say?

Several years ago, before the communists came into China while our missionaries were still working freely there, the representative of the Standard Oil Company came into one of our mission offices one morning and introduced himself to the young man who was the director of the mission station.

He said, "Standard Oil has sent me to ask you to take charge of our district operations in this area, and we are prepared to offer you a salary twice as much as you are getting as missions director here."

The young man looked at the man from Standard Oil and smiled and said, "No, thank you."

And then the man from Standard Oil looked at the young man and offered him another figure, quite a bit larger.

Again, the young man who was a mission director smiled and said, "No, thank you."

Then the man from Standard Oil said, "Well now listen, what is your figure? Standard Oil wants you. We've observed your talents and we know you know the language here, and you know the people. Standard Oil needs you. Just name your figure."

The young mission director smiled back at him and he said, "Why, there's nothing wrong with your offer. In fact, you have me already greatly overestimated. The trouble is with your job. Your job isn't big enough."

Oh my friends! It's a wonderful thing to know what we're born for, and to be about our Father's business. And when that question is settled, there is no offer that the world can make that can even tempt us. May I repeat that, friends? When that question is settled, there is no offer that the world can make that can even tempt us. But as the prophet weeps and wails in these lamentations, "How is the gold become dim! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!"

How many young men that God has called to give this message and get a people ready for the coming of God is out here working for the world at \$10 or \$20 a day, or I don't care \$100 or \$200 or \$500 a day; it doesn't make a bit of difference to me. Has he missed something? Yes. How the gold has become dead.

Do you remember what that man said, whom Jesus called to follow Him? He said he had some things to look after, to arrange. And Jesus said, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." In other words, let the world take care of its problems.

God never sent Seventh-day Adventists to solve the problems of this world. Is this world a ship that has a few leaks in it, and if we work hard enough, we can get the leaks patched up, and continue on our way as a world? Or is this world a ship that has been torpedoed by the great enemy, and our business is in the *lifeboat* picking up as many as we can before the poor old wreck goes down? There's only one business for the child of God. That's the work for which he was born: the

dedicated work of finishing this message and getting a people ready for the coming of Jesus Christ. Let me read it in the inspired commentary:

“We have no time now to give our energies and talents to worldly enterprises. Shall we become absorbed in serving the world, serving ourselves, and lose eternal life and the everlasting bliss of heaven? Oh, we cannot afford to do this! Let every talent be employed in the work of God” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9*, page 104.

How many talents to be employed for the work of God? *Every* talent. Somebody says, “Oh, but the conference can't pay that many.”

The Lord knew that. That's why He arranged for hundreds and thousands to be trained and engaged in lines of service which do not *drain* the funds of the conference. Paul often labored as a self-supporting missionary, and yet he was one of the apostles. At the beginning of the work of the third angel's message, James White and Joseph Bates, and others of the pioneers were often self-supporting missionaries. And while God definitely led in the forming of our church organization, and arranging the beautiful and wonderful system of the tithe to pay those workers who are called by the church and consecrated to its service for that particular work, God never intended that such an arrangement should interfere with His overall plan of engaging in this work *every* talent. *Every* talent.

If you were to come to a place where a great building was being erected, and every time you went by, there was a sign out there—Men Wanted. Hiring men here, men wanted. One day you went by and the sign was down. What do you conclude? One of two things. Either the job is finished, or there are no funds. They've either run out of work, or they've run out of money.

God is not in either one of those positions. He hasn't run out of money, and oh my friends, He hasn't run out of work. Soon, oh so soon it'll be finished. But right now, you and I have the opportunity of being used for the thing we were born for—to help finish this work.

Don't misunderstand me. The references are very clear. God has not called everybody to be a minister in the usually understood sense of the term. He hasn't called everybody to leave working with his hands and preach and teach instead. No.

Jesus as a carpenter, glorified common, ordinary, everyday work. As a tentmaker, Paul did the same thing. James White did it cutting wood and cutting hay. But the two things that I would like to lay upon your heart is this, my friends: first, there is an infinite difference between working at common toil as a part of a soul-winning program, and working at common toil merely to make money. And that leads me to my second point: it will lead to the *choice* of vocation. It will lead to the kind of work we choose.

If the thing we're interested in is worldly gain or worldly honor, let me tell you there are a thousand voices today telling us just what to go into. There are all sorts

of marvelous things that are being offered to young people in careers. I could name a lot of them, but that's not my subject. There's just one career that God is calling you to, my friend, and that's the career of finishing this work.

And don't let that golden vessel be borrowed or bought by some Edomite. I care not if he offers you fabulous sums. You were born for one thing, and that's to help God finish His work. If that includes being a carpenter, be the kind of carpenter that Jesus was. If that includes being a tentmaker, be the kind of tentmaker Paul was. If that includes being a farmer, be the kind of farmer that Elisha was.

There are a world of vocations and a world of careers that are dazzling the eyes of people today that are not for Seventh-day Adventists. And I could read you some things in black and white from the Spirit of Prophecy that *names* certain money-making, speculative businesses that are being engaged in by too many of our people today, but that's not my subject. And if I should read one of those, somebody might say, "Well, I'm glad I'm not in that business." But listen, friend: There are a hundred other businesses just like the ones that are named. And the common denominator of all of them is worldly pride, worldly ease, worldly honor, worldly recognition, and worldly gain.

Talk about gold. Well, my dear friend, you are already worth more to God than all the gold in this world. Do not let the Devil tell you that if you will go and sell your talents to the world that you can pay a big tithe and give a big offering, and that will help finish the work. Don't let the Devil put you to sleep with that lullaby. That's one of the Devil's tranquilizers. Never you listen to him. I tell you again: You are already worth more to God than all the gold in this world. It's *you* He wants—your time, your service, your love, your witness, because you have been chosen before the world began to have a part in the finishing of the work in this generation.

There's a wonderful chapter in the book *Education* called *The Lifework*. It was written before most of the people in this room were born. It says:

"The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being" *Education*, page 262.

Before you were born, God gave this work of *finishing* the message in that generation, and here we still sit. Sit? Yes. The call is, "go work today in My vineyard."

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where 'the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;' where 'the inhabitant shall not say, I am

sick,' and 'the voice of weeping shall be no more heard.'"
Ibid., page 271.

What is your goal? Do you know that young men today *in their twenties* are worried over the matter of what line of work they shall go into, and using *this* as one of the decisive ways: what kind of security they're going to have when they retire at 65. Can you imagine it, friends? Young men and women are being *sold* into going into this line of work or that line of work on the basis of *retirement* benefits!

Are we getting ready for the finishing of the work in *this* generation, or are we not? Are we wanting to be really sure that our grandchildren, yet to be born, are well taken care of by our social security retirement benefits, or are we busy about finishing the work of God in this world? Believing Heaven's promise: go into the vineyard, and whatever is right, Jesus will give you. We have no time now to give our energies and talents to worldly enterprises.

Let me tell you the basic reason why, friend: just like those golden vessels. They had been *given* to the sanctuary. They had been *dedicated* to the temple service. No priest had any *right* to take one of those golden vessels and loan it out or sell it to the Edomites. Am I correct? He had no right to, whatever the price. And my dear friend, oh turn and read it, take not my word for it:

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price"
1 Corinthians 6:19.

You're not your own. Why not? You're bought with a price. What's the price? The precious blood of Jesus. Oh, look at Calvary and tell me, do you recognize that you've been bought? Have your hands been purchased by the nail-pierced hands? Have your feet been bought with those feet that are eternally scarred by the spikes? Has your heart been purchased by the broken heart that was stabbed with the spear?

Oh, how can men do *anything* but what He says? How can men *think* of selling their time and talents to a wicked world for security or anything? How can it be done? Oh, what a devil the Devil is. How is the fine gold become dim! God help us to get back to Calvary. God help us to give our lives, every ounce of life, every moment of life, to the *one* job of getting a people ready for the coming of Jesus.

Again, I say: and that doesn't mean that everyone is to abandon common work. No. But it means that that work will be a part of God's plan for your life to win souls. It means the kind of work you engage, whether it's mechanical work or whatever, is definitely *chosen* with the idea that this is the way in which I can best win souls. Not the way I can best make money, not the way I can best solve my financial problems, but the way I can best help Jesus get a people ready for the coming of the Lord. That's it, friends.

And with such an army of self-sacrificing, dedicated young men and women, the work can be finished quickly. It could have been 60 years ago when this book

was written. It can be done now whenever we get the vision and put *all* we have into it.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee with all our hearts tonight that You value us so highly and love us so much. We're glad to find out that we're golden vessels as Heaven weighs and measures things. We're sorry that we've ever let Babylon have the use of us. And by Thy grace, dear Lord, we're coming back to Thy temple to be used to Thy glory.

Forgive us where we've wandered. And oh, tonight accept us as *Thy* vessels to be used in the service of the sanctuary. We ask it in Christ's name, amen.

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