

Three Things I'm Thankful For

#0041

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 31, 1979

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" 1 Corinthians 15:57–58.

I'd like to spend a little time with you this evening thinking of three things, particularly to be thankful for, and this is the first one. We are not laboring in vain. That is to no purpose. So many people go through life working with some idea, some plan, only to have it end up in failure.

One of England's greatest poets, Lord Byron, died at the age of 36. Shortly before his death, he penned these words thinking of the disappointments and disillusionments that he had experienced.

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
the flower and fruit of love are gone.
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."

God has given me twice as many years as Lord Byron had, and I have nothing but praise to my Lord for the way He's led me. I know that my labor is not in vain in the Lord. I don't mean that I haven't made any mistakes, but my Lord is in the business of teaching me through mistakes and of getting something done in spite of my failures. I praise Him that I know that my labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Just recently, I've had again the thrill which has come to me hundreds of times in the last fifty years of seeing somebody accept Jesus Christ and get ready for baptism to join His remnant church. And I'd rather be in that business, friends, than have all the millions of Ford, or Dupont, or Rockefeller. I'd rather have this joy than have all the prestige and position of the politicians and officeholders of this world.

Brothers and sisters, if we're in soul-winning, we have something wonderful. We know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. We know that we are putting our time, our money, our effort into an enterprise that is going to instead of being hurt by inflation or recession, it's going to draw compound interest all through eternity. A million years from now, souls will be coming to us and saying, "Thank God, you won my soul to Christ!"

Yes friends, it's wonderful to *know* that we are in something certain, something absolutely certain, something that pays off. There will be something to

show for all our labors, and the results will abundantly satisfy us. The end of the road is not darkness, but eternal glory. Isn't that something to be thankful for?

Now, turn to Romans 8:28 and we will see something else to be thankful for.

"And we know..."

Are you a part of the "we"? Thank God! Remember our verse in Corinthians says, "ye know." This says, "we know."

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" Romans 8:28.

What a sweeping statement this is! It's one of those vast, all including statements that only Inspiration can make. We know that all things work together for what? For good to them that love God. In eternity we'll look back and see that. We'll not only have something to show for our work, but we will be able to look back over the record, and over the experiences of life, and see that everything in our lives contributed to the end, the object, the goal. That is if we've been willing to work with God.

We'll look back with joy to even our darkest experiences, and everything will all fit together. This is most beautifully presented in *Volume 9*, page 286:

"All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9*, page 286.

Isn't that wonderful? Anything today, or last week, or last month, or your whole life that has perplexed you—I could give God at least a dozen things that I would be glad for Him to explain, He will at the right time. He said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

"All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" *Ibid.*

What do you say? Isn't that wonderful? This isn't something that might happen; it isn't some theory, some imagination, this is *real*. Absolutely infallibly certain—these two things we've noted. First, that we're not laboring in vain. We're going to have something to show for our life's work. Second, that we'll be able to

look back and see that everything in our experience contributed to that glorious end, provided, of course, we're willing.

If we deliberately rebel against God, the only way that things work good at of that is that sometimes we get hurt and learn a lesson that way. I am speaking of the children of God who *let* God work His will out. We are not laboring in vain, and everything is working for our good. It all fits together.

Now turn to Ephesians the first chapter.

“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will”
Ephesians 1:9–11.

One of the modern translations renders this:

“God is the One, who in all that happens, is executing His own fixed purpose” *Ibid.*

Let me give you my own, not a translation in the sense that these versions of the Bible are, but the translation into my own experience. It's this:

“The One who runs everything in this universe, who arranges everything on this planet and in worlds afar, is my Friend. He loves me. He loves me so much that He died for me. And He is ordering everything for my good.”

Don't you think I have a lot to be thankful for? Just as true for you if you let Him. Friends, we have a wonderful God. Why would people be interested in gambling? I'll tell you why. They don't know that there is such a thing as a sure thing.

Many people in this world look at life itself as a gamble, so no wonder they run to Las Vegas, or Reno, or Atlantic City. But praise God, friend, I'm interested in something that is absolutely certain. There's not the slightest possibility of loss or risk. Paul says,

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air” 1 Corinthians 9:26.

In ancient Greek games, only one could win the race. The others also ran. One man got the wreath of laurel. But in the Christian race that you and I are participating in, *every one* of us can win. Every step we take, every experience that

comes to us, is part of the glorious privilege—the glorious experience of being led by God, guided by God.

Why would people sell this destiny for ordinary things? Why would they do it? I do not understand it. Yes, I think I do: They look at a way from the reality of these things.

You remember that Bunyan, in his great allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, pictures a scene that Christian saw in the house of the interpreter on his way to the celestial city. In this house of the interpreter were various three dimensions visually, we might call them, object lessons. In this particular one, there was a great cage. In this cage was a man, and there was straw.

This man that was in there in this great cage, he had a muck rack. He was raking around in all that straw and muck. Every now and then, he would hold up some little glass trinket or something that reflected light that he had picked out of the mud and muck. He was gleeful because he had found it. And Bunyan says, "All the while, there stood one above his head holding out a golden crown."

He missed the crown because he was just working with that muckrake in the mud and filth hunting for those little pieces of glass that glittered. What a shame, my friends! What a shame! Oh, how good God is to offer us certainty, reality, and eternal riches. The things that survive this wreck of a world. And I repeat, we're certain. We're certain.

"Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" 1 Corinthians 15:58.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God" Romans 8:28.

The patriarch Job lost all earthly riches. He lost all material things. But there in the ashes covered with boils, surrounded with critics, his faith rose triumphantly and he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. He'll stand at the latter day on the earth and I will see Him. My eyes shall behold Him and not a stranger." Yes, friends, Job's faith will be rewarded. He was blessed then in his faith, and someday soon, he's going to be raised from the dead and brought forth to see his Redeemer.

We hear that same triumphful note from the apostle Paul, the last letter he wrote from that dungeon in Rome, knowing that he might be beheaded by the cruel tyrant Nero any day. He said,

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" 2 Timothy 1:12.

Talk about security: *that's* security, friends.

People talk about life insurance, but the only way you can get anything out of that is to die as a rule, and that doesn't assure your life. It might help some dependent afterward. It might not. My point is, friends, this is real life insurance that we are studying about tonight, eternal life insurance. It means that even if our earthly house is dissolved, we have a house eternal in the heavens not made with hands.

We know that though this body should decay, God will give us an immortal body at His coming, and we shall live with our Lord forever and forever.

"They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" 2 Timothy 65:21–22.

And remember, the One who has promised us all that in the future, has promised us that day by day now in the present. He's looking after us just as fully, and as carefully, and as wisely now as He will then. He's arranging various experiences of our life to fit together to work out the lessons that you and I need to learn. Let's thank Him, what do you say? Then let's look forward to that grand meeting that Job had in mind.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ...in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" Job 19:25–27.

David had that same vision:

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" Psalm 17:15.

Brother Boykin, come and sing it with me, will you?

[Elder Frazee and Brother Boykin sing hymn "I Shall Know Him" together.]

When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

Chorus:

I shall know Him, I shall know Him
And redeemed by His side, I shall stand.
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
By the print of the nails in His hand.

Oh, the soul-thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face

And the luster of His kindly beaming eye;
How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love, and grace
That prepared for me a mansion in the sky.

Chorus:

I shall know Him, I shall know Him
And redeemed by His side, I shall stand.
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
By the print of the nails in His hand.

What a wonderful hope we have, dear friends!

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