

# The Entering Wedge

#0047

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 2, 1981

Our text this evening is Proverbs 11, verse 30. The wisest man that ever lived was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us this gem of wisdom.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that  
winneth souls is wise” Proverbs 11:30.

Will you repeat the last line there?

“He that winneth souls is wise” Proverbs 11:30.

Tonight I trust that all of us will be wiser when we leave this chapel. The wisest man in this world is the one that knows how to win souls and puts his wisdom to work. You know God has many ways of teaching us lessons. One, of course, is through the Bible. But we’re told by Inspiration that the Word of God includes not only the written word, but the book of nature and the book of experience. ‘

In Christ’s Object Lessons, page 26, we read that in every line of useful labor, Christ desires that we shall find a lesson of divine truth. In every line of useful labor, find a lesson of divine truth. I’ve been finding some lessons of soul-winning as I’ve been using the wedges and the maul in splitting wood. I want to share some of these lessons with you for in *Volume 6*, page 177, we are told that those who are students in the industrial departments, and I’m one of those, should have time and opportunity given them to tell the practical spiritual lessons they have learned in connection with the work. So this is my opportunity.

You see, I am one of those fortunate people that get to burn wood to keep me warm. And Brother Carter and his farm crew have been kind enough to go out in the woods and cut down some trees that were suitable for being burned, but they listened to me when I asked them that they would please bring them unsplit. Cut them up in proper lengths, but bring them in unsplit so that I could have the joy and the exercise of splitting them. And that’s how I happened to get in on these wonderful lessons.

I found an interesting text to put with this in Jeremiah 23:29. And before we turn to the maul and the wedges and the log, we’ll hear a very interesting text.

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and  
like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”  
Jeremiah 23:29.

Now, the hammer that Jeremiah is talking about here is hardly a tack hammer. It is used to do *what* in Jeremiah’s book? To break the rock. It has some

weight to it. It takes a strong man to handle it. But you know, while this maul could break rock in pieces, you could hit a log a long time before you get very much results if you hit it in this way.

And while there are some pieces, some kinds of wood that will split by using the sharp edge of the maul, there are others that you could hack away for a long time that way without getting it split. So we use what? Wedges. Now looking at these wedges from where you sit, you'd say they are practically alike, wouldn't you? But one is a little longer than the other, and one is sharper than the other. And the wood can tell the difference.

[Elder Frazee is requesting someone] Give me a sharp edge, would you?

Would it make any difference whether I put the wedge on the log like this or whether I put it like this? Now, what did Jeremiah say God's Word is like? A hammer. These wedges are tools that are used along with the hammer or the maul to accomplish the desired result of splitting the wood. And so I want you to think of these wedges as wedges of truth. God's Word is...? Truth. God's law is...? Truth. The testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, is truth. God deals in truth exclusively. And there is power in truth. But it makes a difference in how we go at the application of truth to human hearts.

I submit that the wedge weighs just the same whether we hold in this position or in this position. But if what we want is to get into the log with it, it makes all the difference whether we put the sharp end down or the dull end down. And so it is in the preaching of truth, whether it's from the desk, or whether it's in private studies, personal work. The same truth may be presented, but we constantly need to be thinking, "What is the way to present this truth in such a way that it is accepted?"

Now merely putting people in contact with truth doesn't in itself accomplish very much. We may put this wedge on the log and let it sit there for a day, a week, a month, a year. When we come back, what has happened? Nothing's happened. And we may say, "Well, I told so and so such and such." Yes, you told them. What happened? We've heard of things that went in one ear and out the other. Some don't even get in the ear, dear friends. Some don't even get in.

The great purpose of soul-winning is to reach the heart with the truth of God. And so as I have been splitting the wood in recent days, I've been thinking about the entering wedge. You've heard of that expression. The entering wedge. Do you know why the entering wedge is the entering wedge? Because it's God's way of helping us to carry out with human hearts what the wedge does with the log.

Do you know what a wedge is? I got to looking at it as I was using it, using a wedge is the way to get a log to accept gradually what it will not accept all at once. May I repeat that? Using a wedge is a way of getting a log to accept gradually what it would not accept all at once. It's the same wedge. And when it finally gets through, the log takes the whole thing. I love to give it that last tap that sends it singing down way into the wood. But there's no way to get the log to do it all at once. It just won't do it.

In fact, one has to be careful, especially with some kinds of wood, to let that first stroke of the maul on the wedge be a gentle one. There are some pieces of wood, particularly if there are knots in them, that you can put the wedge on there and give it a heavy stroke, and it'll just bounce it off. Just bounce it right off. And there is where we need special tact in dealing with human hearts. Pushing, crowding, driving, no, this won't do. We must find the place in the log; we must find the place in the human heart that will receive just a little bit.

Now the heart may be like the log. I suppose that if the log could think, it might say, "Well, I'll take that little sharp end, but believe me, I'm never going to take that big heavy end." But it doesn't know what it's up against—the log doesn't. [Elder Frazee laughs.] And thank God, friends, the Holy Spirit is working with our efforts to help human hearts accept the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Isn't it a wonderful truth that we carry? Wouldn't it be a shame by lack of tact, lack of carefulness to cause people to reject, resist the truth? There's a science in this.

"The truth is to be spoken in love. Then the Lord Jesus by His Spirit will supply the force and the power. That is His work" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 123.

Who is it that supplies the power? The Lord Jesus by His Spirit. But sometimes when we think of power, we think of that wind that was so great that it broke the rocks there in Horeb. Or we think of the mighty fire that scorched. Or we think of the earthquake that tore things up. But concerning each of those powerful agencies, the inspired record is, "The Lord was not in them." But where was the power and blessing of God manifested to Elijah? In a still small voice.

We need to have great respect for the quiet operation of this Spirit of God, my friends. Not a lot of noise and din and confusion. Not a lot of human pressure taking the place of the wooings of the Spirit. Oh, that God may give us the force and the power of love! For love, dear friends, is the greatest power in the universe. And God desires every application of truth to be powered by love, not by human force and pressure.

"This will flow forth in words that will reform, but not exasperate" *Ibid.*

Is there a way to present the truths of the third angels' message in a way that exasperates? Has it ever happened? Is there a way to present the beautiful principles of health reform in a way that discourages and exasperates? Yes. Now, as you well know, the health work has been said by inspiration to be what? The entering wedge. I was interested in how this is worded on page 73 or *Counsels on Diet and Foods*:

"When properly conducted, the health work is an entering wedge, making a way for other truths to reach the heart" *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 73.

What are those first few words? When properly conducted. So there is a way to use the health message and the health ministry that makes it a what? An entering wedge. But there was no wedge ever made, friends, but what it was wider at one end than the other. Do you agree with me? If it wasn't, it wasn't a wedge. And so the health work is a what? A wedge. What kind of a wedge? An entering wedge.

By the way, I want you to see what this entering wedge did over here. Here is a hunk of log. Isn't that nice? That will go in my stove now. The whole log would have never gone in my stove, but that will go in nicely. It will burn all night. What did it? A wedge. The entering wedge.

Now, in this same book *Counsels on Diets and Foods*, page 465, is a paragraph on using the wedge. What kind of wedge? The entering wedge. How to carry on our health work in such a way that it is really effective as an entering wedge, and how not to.

"The Lord desires every minister, every physician, every church member, to be careful not to urge those who are ignorant of our faith to make sudden changes in diet, thus bringing them to a premature test" *Ibid.*, page 465.

In other words, be careful that you don't try to get them to take the whole wedge all at once. It's what kind of a wedge? An entering wedge. And remember, it's the little end of the wedge that must be applied.

"Hold up the principles of health reform, and let the Lord lead the honest in heart. They will hear and believe. The Lord does not require His messengers to present the beautiful truths of health reform in a way that will prejudice the minds of others" *Ibid.*

What are the principles of health reform here called? Beautiful truths. Do you agree? But it's possible for a person that's lived with these principles, either from birth, or from the new birth, it's possible for a person to become so thrilled with them, and filled with them, that he wants somebody else to get them how? Right now. Instantly.

But that isn't the way a wedge operates. Remember, a wedge is a device for getting the log to accept gradually what it never would all at once.

"The Lord does not require His messengers to present the beautiful truths of health reform in a way that will prejudice the minds of others. Let no one place stumbling blocks before those who are walking in the dark paths of ignorance. Even in praising a good thing, it is well not to be too enthusiastic, lest you turn out of the way those who come to hear" *Ibid.*

Oh, that's it! That's it. It's possible for me to take this maul and get that wedge there and hit it so hard that it'll just bounce back, you understand. Enthusiasm is a wonderful thing, but I must not try to get all the wedge in the first tap. Gradually. Little by little. That means, friends, if it means anything at all, it means that there are *some* things that I know that I don't tell my audience the first night or the tenth night. Is that correct? That's right.

Jesus was the great medical missionary. And after a three and a half years course in medical evangelism, He said to His star students,

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" John 16:12.

The wedge had gone partway in, but it wasn't all the way in.

I've wondered about it, friends. Do you suppose that you and I could give a course of health lectures and not tell all we knew in any number of days or weeks that we had? Do we exercise *tact* in giving people only that which they are ready and able to accept and put in practice? Christ imparted only that knowledge which could be utilized, we're told. I want to learn more about God's way of reaching human hearts as I work with these logs and the wedges.

Now there was one more sentence in this.

"Present the principles of temperance in their most attractive form" *Ibid*.

In what? Does that mean going at it like this? No. That won't reach. I am to take the thin edge, something so thin, that the log can accept it. And then, gently, but firmly, keep working on. And what did we read is the power back of the truth that makes it effective? The power of love from the Holy Spirit.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" Romans 5:5.

So while we need mauls and wedges, the mauls and wedges of truth, we need back of that a power, not a mere human power, but a divine power, the power of love. The power of love. This is the way Jesus reached those whose hearts were opened.

I had an experience the other day that had quite a lesson in it. I was trying to split a log, and it was a very obstinate one. In fact, I finally got both my wedges tied up in it and couldn't get them out. Well, you say, "What happened? I see you have them tonight." Yes, I do. I got some pieces of wood and drove them in and finally was able to get my wedges out, but the old log is still in one piece. I'm going to give it to somebody that can burn that size log.

Were there hearts that Jesus found so obstinate, so hard, so unyielding that even His divine love and truth couldn't reach them? Were there, friends? Ah yes.

Yes. And so when we have done our best to be tactful and wise and loving, nevertheless, friends, we'll not get everyone to respond any more than Jesus did.

But the Lord Jesus could not endure the thought that one soul should perish. He wept over Jerusalem, that city that was so hard and unyielding. And finally, He got through His apostles a great company of the priests that were obedient to the faith. Isn't that wonderful? Thank God. We are to work, we're told, for those souls who look to us as hopeless as though they were in their graves.

One man, a member of the Sanhedrin, that finally accepted, do you remember his name? Saul of Tarsus. And of course, before that, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. So at least three members of the Sanhedrin, that high council of the Jews with seventy members, at least three of them accepted Christ as the Messiah. How carefully He worked with them, how lovingly, how patiently. God give us that love and patience. What do you say?

I love that wonderful promise in *Volume 9*, page 189.

"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9*, page 189.

Isn't that wonderful? Yes. Using the narrow end of the wedge instead of the wide end, and seeking the Lord for the divine power of love instead of the human pressures of argument and force. Oh, that Jesus may teach us how utterly helpless we are without Him.

Now we have seen that the power of love comes through the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is what? Love. Galatians 5:22. I want more of that power of love in my life, don't you, dear friends? And how are we going to get it? How does the Spirit come? In answer to what? To prayer. Ask of the Lord for the Spirit. Ask and it shall be? Given you.

You parents, Jesus says you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that? Ask Him. Shall we ask for the Spirit? Remembering that the fruit of the Spirit is what? Love. And let us not *try* to win souls without that power of love.

In an old *Review* of March 19, 1889, is this very interesting statement:

"Go to individual souls, and labor with them in the Spirit of Christ. O, if you would go to the lost, and let your heart break before them, we should see a work similar to that which was done in 1844. Then you might have seen three or four in the orchard, two or three in a barn, five or six in a chamber, pleading with God for souls" *Review and Herald*, March 19, 1889.

What were they wanting? They wanted the power to reach men and women for God. There you see them. Two or three together out in the orchard, or in a barn, or five or six in a chamber pleading with God for souls.

You know, as I've thought of this first vesper service of the new year, a great longing has come into my heart that *everyone* shall have the joy of reaching people for God this year. You can do it, my friends. There are logs that Jesus wants you to reach with the wedge of truth, but the power must come from divine love. Divine love.

That's why He's given us medical missionary work in all its aspects, loving ministry to the pain-ridden, to the disease-infested. Loving ministry to those who need to learn the laws of health in life. And as we do this, we shall, if our hearts are open to the Spirit's influence, find ways to bring in other precious truths. But all of it must be with that tact born of divine love. The tact born of divine love.

In *Volume 7*, page 21, the Lord's messenger says:

"Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?"  
*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7*, page 21.

Will you turn to Matthew 18:19? I want all you to read this text. There's a wonderful promise.

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven"  
Matthew 18:19.

Isn't that a wonderful promise? Now the next verse.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" Matthew 18:20.

Thank the Lord. There are some logs that it takes more than one wedge to split. There are some promises that take more than one individual to claim, and here is one of them. Oh, let us enter in to this spirit of united prayer. Praying alone, praying in little groups of two or three or more, seeking the Lord for His Holy Spirit that God will bless our efforts to bless others and give us the tact born of divine love, and that He will work with the souls for whom we are laboring.

Tell me, dear ones, is there somebody that you long to see won to Christ this year? Is there somebody that you are praying for that God will give you their heart this year? If there's somebody that's on your heart tonight, would you like to raise your hand? Thank God. Now how does He say we can have help? If we'll agree and get somebody else to pray with us, two or three together, claiming the promise. What does He say He'll do? "It shall be done for them of My Father which is in

heaven.” Oh, that Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, shall work with our efforts to reach human hearts. I know He will.

[Service ends with a season of prayer and song.]

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