

Repentance Daily

#0062

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 20, 1971

John 6:28–29. This will bring back to our minds some of the things we studied last Friday night and will prepare us for some precious things the Lord would have us look at this evening.

“Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” John 6:28–29.

Remember last week we were studying from John 3:16. Shall we say it again, together?

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

The emphasis is on the word ‘believing.’ This rest of the verse is largely taken up with what God is, what God does, what He has done, and what He’s willing and ready to do. This is the *wonderful* thing. But whether you and I participate in the benefits depends on whether we believe.

The people said, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” Jesus said the work of God is that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

I was talking with an attorney friend, a man who has made a real success in this world. In the course of our conversation, he asked me, “Mr. Frazee, do you believe everything in that Bible?”

I said, “Yes.”

He said, “Really? Do you believe that story about the man that whipped his ass and it talked back to him?”

“Yes, I believe that.”

“Well, do you believe about the Red Sea opening and people going through?”

“Yes, I believe that.”

He said, “Well, how could those things happen? How could an animal talk? And how could the Red Sea open up so they could go through?”

“Well,” I said, “That’s a miracle. God can do that; He can do anything He wants to.”

We had just been talking about when we were going to meet Jesus when He comes, and be with Him in the upper world, and the good things He was going to share with us. His law partner was there with him. You know, those men are logical thinkers, and the Lord gave me this question to put to them. I said, “Now, we’ve just been talking about when we’re going to be with God in the upper world. How in the world are we going to get from this planet up there?” And I said, “Think of the billions of dollars and all the efforts they’ve made just to get to the moon, and that’s only the back door of this world. How in the world are we going to get there? Faster than the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second.” And you know he thought about it. I said, “Don’t you think that’s a greater miracle than for an animal to speak or the Red Sea to open up?” And he said, “That’s right.” “And think about the miracle of God in Christ coming down here and being born into the human family, and becoming one of us. The miracle of the virgin birth, so Christ is the Son of God as well as the Son of Mary. Isn’t that far greater than all those stories of miracles in the Old Testament?”

The lawyer turned to his law partner and said, “You see, these Seventh-day Adventists, they have an answer.” Now I say that to God’s glory, folks. And you know we talked round about various things, about smoking. He told me that he had given up smoking several years ago and that if someone had offered him a thousand dollars right now to just smoke three cigarettes and inhale a bit, he said, “I’d turn it down. I wouldn’t take the thousand dollars. I wouldn’t go back to that for anything.” But his partner sitting across the table was puffing away, and we talked together about that, and I told him about the five-day plan that we’re going to have at the YMCA.

Isn’t it a wonderful thing we have something to share with men? And then, as we talked together, the question came up of *how* men could quit tobacco. That will wasn’t very good for him but what he needed was motivation. And I felt impressed to say to this young man, “Would you like to know what to me is the greatest motivation in the world to quit cigarettes?” “Yes,” he said. “Well,” I said, “It’s this. I’ll just share with you something that has come to me. You know, to most people the big thing in religion is how it affects *them*—what it does to *them*, what it means to *them*. How it relates to *them*.” And they both agreed. I said, “I have come to realize that the great thing about it is what it means to God.”

And then I shared with those men what I had shared with you. I told him about that boy down in Venezuela who was kidnapped. His father had to pay a ransom of \$900,000 to get him back. And I raised the question, “Was the boy worth it? What made him worth it? Was it the ransom? No. He was worth it to the father before he was kidnapped. Right? That’s why his father paid the money to get him back. What a valuable boy that was. \$900,000.”

Then I said, “When you and I come to Calvary, we see a ransom paid for us. The Son of God dying for us. Are we worth it? Of course, the natural thing is for us to say, No, we are not worth that much. But does the One who paid the ransom know values? Does He? Did He get cheated? Are we worth what He paid? If we

aren't worth what He paid, then He got cheated, didn't He? Do you see then what a wonderful thing it is to take *care* of what He paid such a ransom for? That, to me, is the greatest motivation to quit cigarettes or anything else that's harming this body."

Well, they had to go up to another part of the state, so he told the partner to get the brief ready to file. And he stood talking with me there in the office a little longer, and he said, "You know, Mr. Frazee, I've lived awhile. I'm not too much of a religious man, although I sat awhile in a seminary, getting ready to be a minister, but that wasn't for me. But I want to tell you something. I know a lot of people in a lot of different religions and a lot of different churches, and I'm impressed with this fact: that Seventh-day Adventist are more affected and more impressed by what they believe than any church I know of." He meant that it entered right in to the daily life.

Is that something for us to live up to? Is it? Oh, yes. Well, if it's so, why is it? Because it's back to that question my friend asked me. "Do you really believe every word in the Bible?" That's the thing. When you and I, or anybody else, would begin to dissect and say, "Well, I can believe that, but oh, this over here, I'm not sure I can take that," then we have lost the *power* of the Scriptures. If this is the Word of God, how *dare* man to challenge it? If it is *not* the Word of God, how can any sensible man believe it for it *claims* to be God's Word from Genesis to Revelation? If it isn't His Word, it's a fraud, and fraud has no saving power in it. Does it? Not a bit. Oh, I thank the Lord for *faith* to believe the Bible.

"Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" John 6:28–29.

Let's believe, what do you say?

Now, I'd like to study with you a little more about what we were looking at last Friday night about what is involved in believing.

You recall that James says:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" James 2:19–20.

Let me ask you: What kind of faith would a dead faith be? Well, it wouldn't be faith at all; let me answer the question. It would only be a *pretended* faith, a farce. That's right. And the reason—don't miss it—that faith without works won't save anyone is simply this: it really isn't *faith*. As a friend of mine says, "Faith is so good, it *works*."

Faith and love are really the same. They belong together. They're attributes of God. No man can have real, full, saving faith in God without loving Him. And nobody can love God without faith. And in James, the apostle is telling us that a faith that doesn't work is not real faith; therefore, it doesn't save anybody. And you

remember that John, in his epistle, five chapters devoted to telling us of the importance of love, the wonderful privilege of sharing the love of God expressed to us in Christ, and revealed through us to our brethren. John tells us all the way through his book that no matter how much love we say we have for God, if we don't love our fellow man, we are liars. And he said that if we don't keep God's commandments, we're liars.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”
1 John 2:4.

John learned this from the lips of Jesus Himself. He heard Jesus say:

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” John
14:15.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say, “If you keep My commandments then I'll love you.” Oh, no. John says we love Him because He first loved us. God loved us when we were commandment breakers, sinners. Didn't He? Praise God, He did. But when the miracle of His grace takes place in our lives, and like little children we begin to love back.

“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” 1 John 5:3.

So faith and love manifest themselves in obedience, in cooperation with God.

One of the great commands of our Lord is expressed by the Apostle Peter, in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost. The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and miracles began to happen. The gift of tongues was given to the church so that the people from many languages that were assembled there could hear the message each in his own tongue. Other mighty miracles were wrought. The gift of prophecy was manifested. As the multitudes saw these mighty miracles and heard the message proclaimed with power by those Galilean fishermen, they said, “What *is* this”? And Peter began to tell them what it was. He pointed out that it was the fulfillment of the prophecy from Joel. He also pointed out that Christ whom they had crucified had risen and gone to Heaven in fulfillment of prophecy, and the outpouring of the Spirit was the signal that Christ had reached Heaven and entered upon His work as priest and King.

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Acts 2:37.

They were convicted. This is the same question that we read in our opening text from John 6:28.

“Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said

unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe...”
John 6:28.

Here, Peter is telling us the same thing but in different words. Inspired by the Spirit, he says:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” Acts 2:37–38.

They were convicted. The first word of Peter's answer was ‘*repent*.’ What does repent mean? Does it mean to have a lot of fun? Does it mean to laugh and holler and have a gay time? What does ‘repent’ mean? It means to be sorry. Sorry for what? How sorry? Sorry enough to *quit*. Is that right? Sure. All right.

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” Acts 2:37–38.

Now turn to the third chapter, and here's another sermon Peter's preaching. By the time he gets through with this, there're 5,000 converts. Oh, what a wonderful sermon. Peter must have preached under the power of the Spirit of God.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” Acts 3:19.

What's the first word in that 19th verse? *Repent*. Can't you forget that, Peter?

“No,” Peter says, “I can't forget it. I had to learn it the hard way.”

Did Peter learn it the hard way? Oh yes, he did. When Jesus told them at the Last Supper that they were all in danger of forsaking Him, and urged them to pray, Peter was loud and quick and said, “Lord, I wouldn't forsake you even if everyone else did.”

And Jesus said, “Peter, you need to be converted.”

Instead of getting convicted, Peter got offended. As the result, he slept when he should have prayed. Then he fought when he should have been standing by in prayer and loving loyalty. Then he fled, and finally denied the Lord with cursing and swearing. Then as he looked at Jesus, *love* melted his heart. Running out to Gethsemane, he fell on his face. He found repentance.

Now here in less than two months, he was preaching that same message of repentance to thousands of people, and they're coming to Christ, they're coming to the cross, they're finding repentance.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing

shall come from the presence of the Lord” Acts 3:19.

A few days ago, I was meditating on the importance of having this experience of repentance, and having it again and again. I was made very thankful as the *Review and Herald* for this last week came, and right on the front page was the article, “Repentance—The True and the False.” This is the issue of August 19, 1971. If you get the *Review and Herald*, be sure and read it. If you don't get it, borrow it and read it. This is a masterpiece, friends. It's an *inspired* message from the pen of Ellen G. White from a manuscript of 1903. But here it is printed for the first time. I urge you to study this on your knees, carefully. I mean this. It's one of the greatest things ever written on the subject of repentance. In the third paragraph comes this sentence. This is the one that's been ringing in my ears:

“Repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life” *Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1894.

When is mortality swallowed up of immortality? Does the Bible tell us? 1 Corinthians 15:51–55. It's when the last trump sounds and Jesus appears.

Someone says, “Oh, well I thought that long before that we'd be all rid of problems like this.”

Well, dear ones. It may be something for us to study about tonight. Now I'll just read this again:

“Repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life” *Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1894.

Does that mean there is no way for me to get sorry enough today so that I never need to be sorry anymore?

That's just what it means. There's no way to do it. Why? We're in a world of sin surrounded by temptations of all kinds. There's a devil that's trying to get us to fall. Besides that, within us we have a nature that naturally inclines to the wrong things; at least on some points. Am I correct?

Do you have any of those problems? Did you ever wish that you could have some surgery and just get rid of it right now? Did you ever come to the altar and think if you'd weep enough and plead with God enough and *believe* enough that something could be done for you that you'd *never* need to struggle again

Paul was about as close to God as anyone the Bible tells about. He said:

“I die daily” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

That's pretty often, isn't it? “I die daily.” And what is he saying? He's saying the same thing as we've read here:

“Repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life” *Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1894.

But now I've got some good news for you, friends. That doesn't mean that we have to be mourning all the time. That doesn't mean that we have to be in tears all the time. I slept last night, but I woke up this morning. Right? Repentance is the experience that prepares us for the joy of faith and acceptance, as sleep prepares us for the joy of awakening. As we go down into the valley, we are prepared to climb up the mountain where we view the Promised Land. And God intends—don't miss this—that every time we experience deeper repentance we shall ascend by *faith* to a higher point of acceptance. These are the two parts of effectual prayer, and we need them both every day.

Let me put it this way: If our first search is for joy, we may never know anything but sorrow. But if our first search is for sorrow, we shall know day by day, higher heights of joy with God. Now, this is a paradox. But if you look at it, you can see it's true. What is it that spoils the joy of the Christian? Isn't it *sin*? What is it that separates the soul from God? Isn't it *sin*? Therefore no true pleasure can come unless that sin is removed.

Someone says, “Can't we get that done once for all, and have it over with and never have any more trouble?”

Well, what did Paul mean when he said, “I die daily”?

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed” Romans 6:6.

When men were nailed to the cross, they lingered on and on. Nailed there to the bar but still a lingering existence. The blessed thing about being a Christian is *not* that we never have any cravings or desires toward wrong. The blessed thing about being a Christian is that through repentance and faith in Christ, we don't need to yield to those cravings. We can live above them.

Take this matter of cigarettes; I was talking about with the attorney today. When a man is a Christian, if he's been in the habit of smoking in the past and God gives him the victory over that, does that mean that automatically he'll never have the craving again? I know some people have that experience. God miraculously delivers them and they never have that particular craving again. But in general, the man who gives his heart to God and gives up his cigarettes he's got a battle on his hands. How many of you have ever gone through it, may I see your hands? Why sure, all over this congregation.

Well friend, do you think that the person who has those cravings is under condemnation? No, no. Because it is written:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” Romans 8:1.

Victory is *not* in having no battles. Victory is victory in the battle. Why sure. When we get home to Heaven the warfare will be over. We're going to enjoy the fruits of victory through endless ages. But oh, now we're on the battlefield. And what ever the master-passion, the hidden craving that gets you down and has again and again, I assure you friends, you can be victorious. But you and I need to seek God every day, first not for joy but for sorrow; first, not for peace but for pain. Pain about what? About *sin*. We need to let God revive in our hearts daily the pain that comes to the repentant soul as he looks at Calvary and sees that *his* sins nailed Jesus to the cross. This experience must be renewed daily. And then, as we behold the Son of God dying for us and sense that our sins put Him to grief, we learn to hate more and more, the sin that caused His pain. Do you see? That sin hurts us more and more. Then we hear His word of love, "I forgive you. I died for you. Come to Me with all your grief, your sins, your sorrows. I freely forgive you. I accept you. And this debt that was caused by your sins, this is for you, to keep you from going back to that life of sin. You're accepted just as if you had never sinned. You're my dear son, my darling daughter; you're my child, I love you. You're accepted, I repeat, just as if you'd never sinned."

But ah, friends, it comes in this order. We need the pain before we get the peace. We need the sorrow before we receive the joy. We need repentance before we express our trust in God that He's going to keep us. He keeps the repentant soul. Whom God pardons, He first makes penitent. Oh, let us seek the gifts of God as He has made them available to us through the gift of Jesus.

So tonight, friends, I'm thankful for the wonderful gifts of God. And may I read this wonderful sentence again in this wonderful article:

"Repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life" *Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1894.

God bless you, each one, as you seek to have this experience day by day.

[Testimony service]

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