

Preparing for the Throne

#0065

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—October 8, 1971

We have something precious to share tonight. The text is John 18:37, the words of Jesus as He stands before Pilate:

“Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then?
Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this
end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,
that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that
is of the truth heareth My voice” John 18:37.

The name of Jesus is pictured KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16). He is pictured standing on Mount Zion, and with Him an 144,000 having His name and His Father's name written in their foreheads (Revelation 14:1).

Will there be any kings in Heaven besides Jesus? Oh, yes. There are some kings in Heaven right now.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to
take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou
wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood
out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;
And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and
we shall reign on the earth” Revelation 5:9–10.

Here are some redeemed from this earth by that precious blood that *sing* this song of praise to Christ, “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings” (Revelation 5:9–10).

There are kings in Heaven tonight. Who are they? I don't know all their names. Enoch is there. Moses is there. Elijah is there. There was a great multitude raised at the time of Christ's resurrection. They went to Heaven with Him, a multitude of redeemed and ransomed captives. God has already demonstrated that He can take poor, weak men down here in this world and make *kings* out of them. They're up there reigning with Christ now. They're looking to reign here on this earth.

I wonder if there are any kings and queens here tonight. At least, dear friends, we're in training for the throne. We might say we are princes and princesses preparing to be crowned. It's a wonderful thing to be in training for the throne, isn't it? Yes. Some of us have to go through a bit of discipline.

When she was a little girl, Elizabeth, the present queen of England, went on a shopping tour with her grandmother, then the queen of England. In the course of

shopping in this particular place, the clerk who was waiting on the royal family addressed little Elizabeth and she said, "My little lady."

Elizabeth said, "I am not a lady. I am the princess."

Her grandmother said to the clerk, "I'm afraid she's right. She's not a lady, but we're going to try to make one out of her." [Audience laughter.]

I repeat, it's a process of training to get ready for the throne. Are any of you experiencing a bit of discipline? Remember, you are training not to be slaves, but kings and queens. Jesus is King of kings. He wants you to be a king, a queen. He wants you to wear a crown. Not just as an ornament or decoration, but as a sign, a symbol, a token of your rulership. I wonder what that could involve? I can give a little insight into a part of it, at least, as we turn to these inspired words. Here's where the power is, friends. It's in these pages that God has given us. Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God. So everything I tell you tonight that's worth much, is coming from inspired pages.

Now back to this question on what does it mean to be a king:

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he
that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city"
Proverbs 16:32.

In the old Roman days, there was a general who would go out to the battlefield on the frontiers of the great Roman Empire. When he had taken some fortified city he brought his captives home in a triumphant entry into the city of Rome, with all these captives being led along; perhaps even a king of some foreign nation, dragged along as a token of the triumph of Rome. But there is someone greater than a man who takes a city. Who is it? The man who can rule his own spirit. Alexander, so called "the Great," conquered the world, but he couldn't conquer himself. He died in a drunken debauch. We think of the great military conquerors of history from Nimrod on down through Julius Caesar, Napoleon and right down to our time. Most of them were not men who could control themselves. But the kings in God's program are able to do what the military conqueror fails to do. They are able to rule their own spirits.

I want to read an inspired commentary on what we have just read from the Scripture:

"Strength of character consists of two things,—power of will, and power of self-control. Many youth mistake strong, uncontrolled passion for strength of character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by his power to subdue his feelings, not by the power of his feelings to subdue him" *Messages to Young People*, page 412.

So Alexander the Great wasn't great at all. Men have called him that; God doesn't call him that. In Heaven's record book, he's not Alexander the Great at all. The *real* greatness and nobility of a man are measured by his power to subdue his feelings.

Do any of you have any feelings that need subduing?

Someone says, "Brother Frazee, that's my problem. I pray so hard, and I still have these feelings."

Well, how do you learn to be a king? By praying long enough and hard enough so you don't have these feelings any longer? Is that the program? Some of you've tried that, and you've been disappointed. That's not it, friends.

Do you know how an army could get a victory without a battle? No, you don't. Victory means success in a battle. What is the battle between? It's the battle between your will and your own feelings. Here is a significant statement from the book *Messages to Young People*:

"The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit striveth against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare" *Ibid.*, page 114.

Let's see how it was in the life of the apostle Paul:

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly" 1 Corinthians 9:26.

He says, "I'm running not like these Greek runners; they don't know whether they're going to win or not. I know I'm going to win."

"So fight I, not as one that beateth the air" 1 Corinthians 9:26.

What are you fighting, Paul? Are you fighting the Devil? He says, "Yes, but that's not the problem I'm talking about right now." Well, Paul, what have you got on your hands: the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans? "Yes, but that's not what I'm talking about." What is it, Paul? The 27th verse:

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Paul had been a Christian for many years. He was an ordained apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a teacher, a worker of miracles. So he had many miraculous gifts. But that man had a fight on his hand every day. He says:

"I die daily" 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Paul says, "I am fighting myself."

Every day Paul had this battle on his hands. Well, what was the matter with him? He really needed to pray and get over that kind of business, didn't he? Oh, he knew that he was going to have that kind of battle day by day, week by week, month by month. But he knew that by God's grace, he could win, and he expected to win. But he didn't expect—and don't miss this—the war to be over today, nor tomorrow, nor next week. He knew he had that battle.

You've got that battle, haven't you? Are you having any battle with your feelings, your desires, appetites, passions, affections, wishes? Well friends, if you're not, I'd like, by God's grace, to see you wake up. If you're not having any battle, you're asleep. That's right.

There are people that the Devil is content to let alone because they're in a good safe place as far as he's concerned. I doubt that any of them are here tonight. I think that the fact you're here is evidence that you are seeking to be on God's side, the winning side. But I know that some of you *think* that if you could only be what you ought to be, and get the help you think you ought to be able to get, then you wouldn't feel the way you feel. The Devil presses your heart and says, "You know something's wrong or you wouldn't feel that way." Doesn't he?

The Devil does it to me, and I'm not just his only favorite. The Devil is after *every* man and woman and boy and girl here, and this is his favorite method. Now, why does God allow that?

Someone says, "Couldn't God hear our prayers and fix us so that we wouldn't have all these cravings that are wrong?"

Let's go back of that and really think through, right down to rock bottom. Couldn't God have made us in the *first* place so we'd never have any of these problems? Couldn't He have made Adam and Eve so that they would never have been tempted? Why in the world did He put that tree there? And why did He say, "You can eat of all these over there, but you mustn't eat of *this* tree." That was a literal tree, friends, with literal fruit on it. And when Eve got near that tree, someone suggested to her that it would be a wonderful thing for her if she would just taste that fruit.

Bless her heart. Eve already had hundreds and thousands of trees available. But that fruit began to look so wonderful and so desirable that she *wanted* it. And finally, she ate it and got Adam to eat it. My point is that sin entered this world as the result of *yielding* to physical desires. In this case, it was a matter of appetite. Eve *wanted* that fruit.

You say, "Why didn't God make her so she wouldn't *want* it?"

Of course, He could have made her so that that fruit looked as bad as anything you detest, but there would have been no temptation, no test, no proving, and no development of character. Character is developed by repeatedly meeting certain tests and meeting them on the right side—meeting them victoriously.

Now, don't misunderstand me: I don't mean that our condition today is like Eve's in Eden. She was perfect. Adam was perfect. They had no sin or any bias toward sin. Nevertheless, Eve had a battle there that she lost because she *chose* to do what the serpent suggested would be desirable and what at the moment she thought she *wanted* to do. She chose to do it.

If even in innocence a person could fail by doing what at the moment he thought he felt like doing instead of what God said, do you think you and I might have a battle today? After 6,000 years in which the race has gone steadily downward. And do you know *why* the race has degenerated as it has? Because generation after generation, people have been doing what they felt like instead of what God said.

How in the world do you think we're going to get back?

Someone says, "If we could have an all-night prayer meeting, perhaps we could all get lifted up to a high and holy plane, and then we wouldn't have these battles anymore."

No. You can pray all night and all day tomorrow, and Sunday morning you are going to have a battle on your hands with the Devil and with *yourself*. With your own physical craving. Your battle may be losing your temper. We read, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Can you rule your spirit?

Human beings differ a great deal in where their temptations lie. I was reading about an old Scottish professor in the theological seminary in Great Britain. He said some things rather stern and stiff sometimes in class. One day one of his students timidly approached him and suggested that he wished the professor could control his temper. The teacher looked at him and said, "Young man, I'll have you to know that I control more temper in one hour than you do in your whole lifetime."

He really had a battle on his hands with who? With *himself*. There are some people who are just naturally as meek as lambs. Don't worry. They'll have a battle on some other point. Their battle may be to keep from eating too much or eating between meals or eating things that aren't good for them. My point is, *everybody* has some battle with *self*.

It may be a matter of the affections. Dealing with temptations that are increasing in this generation, the servant of God raises the question to men: "Do you love a woman that you have no right to love?" It's interesting that the strongest man who ever lived, Samson, went down because he couldn't control his love for women. And the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, went down on this point. He loved many strange women, and they led him off from God. A man may be strong and he may be wise. His muscles may be mighty and his mind may be brilliant. But if he can't control his affections and passions, he's a weak man. He's a weak man. And the answer (don't miss the point) is not that if that man will pray long enough that he'll never have any of those wrong desires again. No, that's not the answer. The answer is to learn to *control* the appetites, control the affections, control the passions, control anger, control lust, and every physical desire.

Can it be done? Well, if it can't, then Jesus can't come, because when He comes, He's coming for a group of kings who have through the grace of Jesus, *conquered* in the battle with self. That is what Paul was talking about. "I fight," he said, "not uncertainly. I know there is a crown of victory ahead. And I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

You know, it's a wonderful thing when a man or a woman or a boy or a girl can sit at the table and when they've had enough, can do the best reducing exercise by placing two hands firmly on the table and push back. In other words, to be able to say, "No, thank you. I've had enough." Do you have control of your appetite? I remember a woman I used to know. Many a time I've heard her sitting at the table and say, "Now I know this is going to hurt me, but I'm going to eat it." She was frank, but her frankness didn't keep her from dying of overeating. Is your body your servant or your master? Are you a king or a slave? Which is it?

Is there victory in Christ? Yes. But someone feels like doing this or that. Listen:

"Temptation is not sin" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 426.*

Temptation is not sin. Aren't you glad? So if you were tempted yesterday, you didn't sin until you yielded. If you didn't yield, you didn't sin.

"Ah, but I felt like it."

Did you ever hear someone say, "Well, if you want to do it, it's just as bad as doing it"? The Devil said that, friend; don't quote the Devil. Where do you find an inspired statement on that? Be sure to give me that reference; I need it. But friends, it isn't there.

Don't misunderstand me. It is wrong to *purpose* to do wrong before you get the chance to do it. That's wrong, but that isn't what I'm talking about. There's a great deal of difference between *feeling* physical cravings and desires and *purposing* to carry out those desires. The battlefield is here in the mind, the heart, the thoughts, and temptation is not sin. Here us another wonderful statement on this:

"Temptations will pour in upon us, for by them we are to be tried during our probation upon earth. This is the proving of God, a revelation of our own hearts. There is no sin in having temptations; but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, page 358.*

The Lord has given us some very practical help in these things. Prayer is one of the means of strengthening our willpower. Not to take away the craving, but give us victory over it. The study of the Bible is another wonderful means. David said:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" Psalm 119:11.

The pathway to victory is through prayer and the study of the Word. But there are some very practical things. I was reading where the Lord's messenger says, "Are you about to go to a committee meeting, and do you feel like having a fight? Do you feel like you're upset? Don't go. Instead of going to that committee meeting, if your spirit is all ruffled, go out and take an axe and cut wood." There is a blessing in physical activity. And there is many a person that wished they didn't have an angry temper, or that they didn't have some other physical desire. What they need is some good physical exercise to get their mind off their stomach or anger or whatever it is that is troubling them. They need to get out and hike, or do some productive thing like chopping wood, as the Lord's messenger suggested.

Are you tempted to eat between meals? Go away from where the food is and get out and do something until mealtime. Are you tempted to overeat? Get up when you've had enough and take a walk or do some light exercise. Getting the mind off these cravings by some productive physical activity is one of the aids to holiness. It is one of the ways to victory.

Are you tempted at night to just lie there and daydream about a lot of things that you'd be better not thinking about? I want to be very practical with you. When people go to bed tired because of physical activity, they're much more likely to have a sleep which refreshes them both bodily and spiritually. People who deal with mental problems all day long, their minds may need rest, but it may be overexcited; physical activity is one of God's ways to get victory.

But all the Bible study in the world, all the prayer in the world, and all the physical activity in the world will not take the place of a very simple and wonderful thing. It is keeping the will on God's side. How? By saying, "I will." "I will give myself to God. I will do it now."

James gets right down to business and deals with things in short sentences. He comes right to the point:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" James 4:7-8.

If you were resisting, what word would you use? *No*. Who is it you're going to say "no" to? The Devil. If you were submitting, what word would you use? Yes. What are you going to say to God then? Yes.

Someone said that "N-O" is the hardest word to pronounce in the English language. Can you say *no* to a rising angry temper? Can you say *no* to lust or appetite or misplaced affection? Can you say *no* to any other craving?

"Oh, but it still clamors."

Well, let it clamor. You don't have to feed every dog that barks. No, you don't, do you? No. And there's good news, friends. If you starve these things long

enough, they'll get weaker and weaker. But don't be too sure to think the battle is over. You'll be surprised how even a starving lust can lift its ugly head and make trouble for you. Our only safety is in Jesus. And remember, He's given us Bible study to help us. He's given us prayer to help us. He's given us physical activity to help us. But all these things are to strengthen our will to fight the battle. They are not to take us out of the battle to a rest camp where we won't have any more trouble or where we won't even hear the cannon roar. No. We're on the battle-*front*, on the battlefield. So Jesus says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

But God Himself won't force you to be what you don't want to be.

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God" *The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

You can be a king. You can be a queen. You can rule yourself. You don't have to yield to those angry risings of temper. You can cry to God, and close your lips *firmly* when those feelings come. You can dart a prayer to God. But all the way through, you must put your *will* on God's side. You must say, "Dear Lord, help me. I *will* be true. Dear Lord, help me. I will *not* express these angry thoughts. I won't do it. God, help me. I'll win through faith in Jesus." Now you can't do it without Him, but He won't do it without you. *You* must be a king. *You* must be a king.

I think I ought to be honest with you: There're an awful lot of half-truths which is worse than lies on this subject we're studying tonight. Thousands of people have the idea that if they could only get the right brand of religion, they wouldn't have any more problems. Oh friend, I call you to battle. I call you to conquest. I call you to victory that comes through struggle for Jesus' sake. Will you accept the challenge? Will you enlist for the duration of the war and not murmur. When you find rising up in your body and in your mind and your spirit, things that you know are not like Heaven, don't let that worry you. Temptation is not sin. It is *yielding* to temptation that makes it sin.

Young people, there is a battle on this matter of affections and passion. A boy thinks a certain girl is so nice. A girl thinks a certain boy is so nice. You can't help those different ideas from coming, but you don't have to express them to anyone. Oh, no. And you certainly don't have to express it to the one who the thought of admiration has come for unless the time has come and you *know* that it's someone God has chosen for you. I'm not dealing with that. I'm talking about this indiscriminate expression of affection, which is so commonplace in the world today.

It leads away from a sacred, pure, holy marriage. If it leads to marriage, then people have missed some of the greatest privileges they could have of winning the victory.

We're going to have a wedding here in a couple of weeks. You know what the minister is going to say to these young people. He is going to say to that young man, "Will you forsake everybody else and love this young woman, and keep yourself only unto her as long as you both shall live?" I'm so glad that I have confidence that this young man can make an intelligent promise in that matter and keep it. And if I didn't believe that I wouldn't marry them. To me, the marriage vow is a very sacred and holy thing. And when a young man and a young woman come to the marriage altar, it ought to be with the assurance in their hearts based on the promises of God and a practical experience that they can *control* the cravings and affections of their natures. That promise ought to mean something, shouldn't it?

So with every physical craving and desire. I am so glad that we can all be on the winning side. No matter how much we pray or study, we still must use the will for God.

Here is a statement that has helped me:

"The surrender to all our powers to God greatly simplifies the problem of life. It weakens and cuts short a thousand struggles with the passions of the natural heart"
Messages to Young People, page 30.

This doesn't mean that if you surrender enough, you'll never have a battle. It just means that the way to make the battle a hundred times harder is to play with it and give in to it a little—indulge it a little. You know how it is with a little child. If the mother says, "No, no" and means it and sticks with it, pretty soon the little one learns that no means no. But if the mother says, "No," and part of the time allows the child to get away with disobedience, it isn't easier on the child. It is much harder, and on the mother too. And pretty soon you hear the mother say, "I don't know what I'm going to do with that child."

When you deal with *yourself* as that indulgent parent does with the child, you are disciplining yourself just like that child is being disciplined. It's really a lack of discipline. And the easiest way to live is not that way. The easy way is just to let go and obey that impulse. But to be battling with yourself and today you indulge the desire, and tomorrow you say, "No," and the next day you indulge.

I think some of us are aware of the fact that in these five-day plan to quit smoking, we always have some people who get the victory and stick with it, thank the Lord. We have others who don't get the victory and keep right on puffing. Then we have others that quit during the five-day plan and for some time afterward, but then they go back to it. So it is in many phases of victory. The hardest way to live is to be indulging one time and resisting another; yielding to the Devil today and yielding to God tomorrow. Back and forth. Oh friends, let us not try to kill the Devil that way. It's a poor way. Let us do what we read here in James, submit to God, and resist the Devil and keep up the fight. What do you say?

I'll show you where the power comes to do this:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith"
Hebrews 12:1–4.

The power doesn't come at looking at our passions and affections, our appetites and desires. No, no. The power comes in looking away from ourselves to whom? To Jesus.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" Hebrews 12:2–4.

Who did? Jesus. Was it worth it? Oh friends, He came down here and took this poor human nature you and I have, and triumphantly met every temptation of Satan. And as a *King* He says to you and me, I have fought the battle in the wilderness of temptation. I fasted 40 days for you. I met the Devil in hand-to-hand conflict. I came through triumphant. I've died for you. I have risen. I am in Heaven interceding for you. Now if you will look to Me, I'll give you power to win the battle.

Notice: The battle of Jesus is not to keep you and me from having a battle. It's to keep you and me from having a defeat. It's quite a difference. We can win as He did through the power of the Word, through the power of prayer and putting our will on God's side. We can win. Take courage, friend.

"Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin"
Hebrews 12:3–4.

Wouldn't it be worth it, friends, to win the victory? Whatever it takes, let's do it.

How many of you got something tonight that's going to help you in this battle? May I see your hands? Did you? Are you going to use it? Are you really? Thank God. And won't it be wonderful this coming week to some of you who have gotten this for the first time tonight, to know that when temptation comes, whether it's from someone else or rising in your own nature, to know that you don't have to be defeated. You're not guilty just because you feel like doing something wrong. You can say, "Thank God." Jesus has said, "I am with you. I will strengthen your weakened will, and like Paul, you can say, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." Thank God.

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