

Rest in Truth

#0102

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 20, 1976

Would you move into a house, signing a lease for it for 10 years without ever looking at it? I doubt if you would. If you and I are going to live in Heaven with Jesus, (not 10 years, or a hundred, or a thousand, but forever), wouldn't it be a good plan to get acquainted with Him?

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” John 17:3.

Those who share eternal life with Jesus will be those who have learned to know Him here in this life. How foolish and futile it would be for God to arrange for you and me to be in Heaven if we wouldn't be happy there. That would be a disappointment both to Him and to us. So He lets us try it out here. I trust we are learning to know Him through His Word, through His works, the beautiful things of nature, through watching His providences in the daily events of life, through trying out His instructions and discovering that they work.

You ladies, when you get a cookbook you like, it's because you've tried this recipe and that one and another one, and the recipes work, and you like the results. And so, as we get acquainted with God, as we try out His principles, we learn to love Him and appreciate Him more and more. We know Him not merely as a historical character, as Someone who lived 'once upon a time,' we know Him as One who is our Friend, personally. We learn to appreciate His attributes.

Two of God's great attributes are truth and love. These are not in any sense opposed to each other. Truth is never to be sacrificed for love's sake. Thank God, love never has to be sacrificed for truth's sake.

“I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” Psalm 85:8–10.

We are never to think of God's law, His righteousness, His truth, as something interfering with our peace or destroying our happiness. Nothing of the kind. God's truth, His law, His righteousness, His character, is to lead us into the way of peace, to fill our souls with joy, with comfort, with satisfaction. The path in which He bids us walk would

never have cost us a pain had we always walked in it. It's getting *back on* the path that sometimes brings us crosses and sorrows.

Some of you have been on these lovely trails, and what a pleasure it is to walk along those paths, free from briars and other impeding barriers. But suppose a person, willfully or carelessly, gets off out into the woods, and he gets tangled up in the briars. Is the trail to blame? No, no. Are those who made the trail to blame? No, no. What's the answer? Get back on the trail. And if we have to walk through a few briars on the way back, we can be thankful we're going to be out of them real soon.

And so it is, my friends, in our lives in this world. We sometimes run into trials and problems, but not a single one of them is due to God's foreordained plan. The Bible says:

“For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men” Lamentations 3:33.

Our problems come because we have not yet entered in fully into God's will and His way. Jesus came down and took those sorrows and griefs that belong to us. He experienced them that we might know that He understands. If we follow His footsteps, we shall rejoice in all of His joy.

What compassion Jesus manifested. Tenderly, He looked upon the toiling people, weary and heavy-laden. And He gave them an invitation:

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light”
Matthew 11:28–30.

Notice He invites us to come and *learn* of Him. It's life eternal to *know* Him. How are we to know Him? We must learn of Him. He is our Teacher. And as we become acquainted with Him, we shall find that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. As we learn to know His characteristics, His attributes, His attitudes, we shall more and more be thinking, “What would Jesus do if He were in this situation? What would His answer be to this question? How would He relate Himself to this circumstance?” And as we come to *know* Him better, we shall be better able to apply in our own lives the beautiful traits of character that shone so sweetly during His sojourn here on earth.

Now, turn to John 17:17. What's that first word? Sanctify. That means “to set apart for a holy use.” The Sabbath is sanctified—it has been set apart for a holy use. You and I are to be sanctified. Here Jesus tells us *how* we are to be sanctified. He was praying to His Father:

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” John 17:17.

We are to be sanctified through the truth. Lies don't sanctify. Errors don't make us holy. Fiction doesn't get us ready for Heaven. Pretense is not the Savior's method. "Sanctify them through Thy truth." Truth sanctifies. Provided we accept it, of course, provided we open our hearts to its life-giving rays, provided we open our minds to its illumination, and provided we live in harmony with the light we see.

Jesus says if we will come and learn of Him—get acquainted with His character, His love, His truth—we will find rest. This evening, I want especially to notice the rest that is found in accepting Jesus' character, in accepting His truth. In accepting His truth, we of necessity give up that which is antagonistic to truth. For we read in a former study, "no lie is of the truth." (1 John 2:21)

Meditate for a moment on the great rest and satisfaction that are found in freedom from lying. We have heard of these lie detectors. Imagine you told a lie. A lie detector test is going on, and you're being examined. How do you feel? Unless your conscience has become completely seared with a hot iron, you are nervous, you're uncertain, you're worried. In contrast to that, the joy there is in simply telling the truth. Someone remarked that one of the nice things about telling the truth is that you don't have to remember what you said.

Satan abode not in the truth (see John 8:44). He didn't think there was enough room within the circumference of truth, so he stepped out of the truth and started telling lies. What happens when people tell lies, whether they are devils or human beings? When they tell one lie, they have to tell another one to cover it up. Then they have two to cover, so they have to tell two more. There is never any end to it. How much more restful and peaceful it is to tell the truth the first time! Then you don't have to change; you don't have to worry.

"Come and learn of Me," Jesus says, "and you will find rest." Rest, not only from lying—in speaking something which is a falsehood—but rest from all attempts to make a false impression.

How many people are weary because they are trying to appear what they are not? They are trying to appear wise when they are not. They are trying to appear beautiful when they are not as pretty as they wish people would think they are.

"Demoralizing extravagance prevails everywhere, and souls are going to ruin because of their love of dress and display. The life of nine tenths of those who are devotees of fashion is a living lie. Deception, fraud, is their daily practice; for they wish to appear that which they are not" *Messages to Young People*, page 359.

I would like to have you look at this principle and its application, not so much from the standpoint of right and wrong, but from the standpoint of "Which really brings

the greatest satisfaction?" How restful it is to just be what you are, and not try to pretend. Pretense, sooner or later, is found out, it's discovered. And how wonderful it is to know that no matter how deep people dig, it's the same all the way through—sterling silver or copper or iron—no pretense.

This has to do far more than with dress and adornment. It enters into every phase of life.

"Put away all pretense and affectation. Act your simple, natural self. Be truthful..." *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 521.

Isn't that easier? What a strain it is to try to act like someone else. You have to be on your guard to be sure to keep up that level of pretense. What a strain that brings! The prophet to the remnant wrote:

"The Lord does not want any of His children to be shadows of others; but He would have each one be his own simple self, refined, sanctified, ennobled by imitating the life and character of the great Pattern" *Review and Herald*, April 13, 1886.

Each person being his own self does not mean that we are to act out the natural, sinful traits. My character is to be sanctified through imitating the Pattern.

Someone says, "Brother Frazee, what's the difference between imitating Jesus when you just said we were not to imitate other people?"

The difference is that Jesus is infinite. There are an infinite number of reflections of His beautiful character. Yours is different from anyone else's. Instead of trying to pattern after someone else (and you can never be like them), instead of that, pattern after Jesus, and we have the glorious assurance that we shall be like Him (see 1 John 3:2). And because Jesus is infinite, there can be an infinite number of reflections, each one different from the rest. So, there's no acting, no pretense, no false.

Besides that, there's another thing that helps me to understand it. If I try to imitate you, I can never do it. The effort to do it imparts no power to me. But when I try to be like Jesus, it is because I have opened my heart to Him, and in a way that no human being can enter into my mind, Jesus can enter into my mind. By His Spirit, He can live in me, not displacing my personality, not silencing my mind and mental processes. But Jesus and I can live in the same house, in the same room. Thus imitating Him is possible and successful, whereas trying to imitate some other human being is *stressful*.

We have a wonderful statement on this point:

“The Lord has given evidence of His love for the world. There was no falsity, no acting, in what He did” *Evangelism*, page 267.

Jesus was always Himself. He wants *me* to be always *myself*. He wants *you* to be *yourself*. There was no falsity, no acting, in what He did. And we are studying these principles for the rest and peace that they bring. Think about how actors have to study their lines. Before they go on the stage, they have gone over and over, trying to be successful in pretending to be someone else. If they happen to forget a line, or if they don't give it the way they are supposed to, they are humiliated and embarrassed. Why not forget acting and be a witness? Just be yourself and tell what you know.

Here is a significant statement:

“I saw that the nominal churches have fallen; that coldness and death reign in their midst. If they would follow the Word of God, it would humble them. But they get above the work of the Lord. It is too humiliating for them to repeat the same simple story of God's goodness when they meet together, and they study to get something new, something great, and to have their words exact to the ear and pleasing to man, and God's Spirit leaves them” *Early Writings*, page 116.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said to His disciples, “Consider the lilies of the field. Look at the beautiful flowers. Consider how they grow. They do not toil or spin. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (See Matthew 6:28.) God wants your life to be beautiful, not by the designs of art, not by the training of elocution. He wants you to be your own simple self, witnessing to what God has taught you from His Word, and His works, and His ways. He wants your witness to come natural and simple. He wants you to be a witness, not an actor.

The reason that acting can never satisfy the soul is because we were not made to be actors. We were made to be ourselves. I read:

“Satan's ruling passion is to pervert the intellect and cause men to long for shows and theatrical performances. The experience and character of all who engage in this work will be in accordance with the food given to the mind”
Evangelism, pages 266.

My experience is dependent upon the food I give my mind. My physical health depends on the food I give my stomach. My mental health—my peace and satisfaction and joy—depend upon the food I give my mind: what I look at, what I read, what I listen to. Can the man who is filling his bloodstream with alcohol or nicotine or caffeine can be as healthy or as happy as the one who is free from those poisons? No. So it is in the realm of the mental. What is happening to the mind of the person who is filling his mind with

fiction, the jumping images of the TV or the movie screen, watching the fictitious? His experience gets to be like what he is looking at.

There is an abundance of that which is real, true, satisfying. But there are people who are so wedded to whiskey and wine that if you would try to take it away from them, they would say, "Don't take away the only pleasure I have!" There are people so wedded to tobacco that they would say, "Would you take away my cigarettes? What will I do? I will go crazy!" Yet it is the alcohol and tobacco that is actually depriving those dear ones of the greatest peace and happiness and rest.

"These poor souls are engaged in a wild chase after worldly pleasure and earthly riches. They have no knowledge of anything more desirable. But games, theaters, horse races, will not satisfy the soul. Human beings were not created to be satisfied in this way, to spend their money for that which is not bread. Show them how infinitely superior to the fleeting joys and pleasures of the world is the imperishable glory of heaven. Seek to convince them of the freedom and hope and rest and peace there is in the gospel" *Ibid.*, page 267.

Jesus says, "Come...and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Did you come? Did He keep His Word; did He give you rest? Then let that rest and peace be revealed, not as a mask to be put on and worn, not like a clown all fixed up for a performance, but as a deep, settled peace within the heart, shining out in the life and in the countenance. Show them how infinitely superior to the fleeting joys of this earth is the imperishable glory and peace and rest of Heaven.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above!
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love.

Drop Thy still dew of quietness,

Till all our strivings cease,
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire,
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!

Dear ones, Jesus loves us. He made us to be happy. He knows the way. When we lost it through sin, He came and showed us how to live. Then He died as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Thank God, He is in the changing business. If we will trust Him, if we will just give our lives to Him, He will relieve us of everyone of these burdens that are wearing away the life's forces. He will introduce us into the reality that brings rest, into truth that brings peace, into love that heals and builds and saves. Blessed Jesus, how wonderful He is! I thank God for all He means to me tonight.

I was speaking to a little girl. She must have been about 12 years old. Her mother was a church member, but her father was not. She lived in a home where there wasn't much peace. Her father and mother quarreled. The older children quarreled. I was talking about giving her heart to Jesus.

Suddenly she looked at me with tears running down her face and said, "Are you happy?"

I was glad to tell her that I was, that I had found the secret. That doesn't mean that *I'm* perfect—it means *Jesus* is perfect. The more I sense my need, the more I sense His ability to *fill* my need. Satisfied with myself? No. Satisfied with *Him*. Yes. All I want is more of Him. I want more truth and no lies. I want a clearer glimpse of His love and no selfishness.

Would you rather walk with Him than walk alone? Would you rather walk with Him, even if in this world you have to walk alone? Is Jesus worth more than all that the world can offer? Amen, and Amen.

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