

Five Smooth Stones

#0114

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 3, 1965

One of the Bible stories that has always fascinated me is the experience of David as a teenager meeting Goliath. The hosts of Israel had been baffled and cowed for weeks listening to this great giant as he hurled his defiance at Israel and Israel's God, challenging Israel to send forth one man to meet him. They were all afraid. In a way, I don't blame them, do you? After all, he was a giant.

But David was moved by the Lord to volunteer—just a teenager. You remember that when King Saul finally acquiesced in the lad's going gave him the royal armor and the royal weapons. And David started out with this armor of Saul's. It must have been an interesting picture. The young man probably was not as tall as Saul, because Saul was noted for his stature—head and shoulders above the host. Aside from that, David was probably not filled out in maturity. At any rate, there he went with this big armor.

Presently he comes back, and the host thinks he thought better of it and decided not to be a suicide. But David has no intention of turning back. He has simply discovered, in time, that he does not need that, and that it would be dangerous for him to attempt to use weapons that he wasn't well acquainted with, and an armour he wasn't at home in. So returning with thanks the armor of the king to the king, he started off with his shepherd's staff and his sling, stopping only at the brook to select five smooth stones. Placing one of these in his sling, he advanced to meet the giant, speaking words of courage and full assurance that God would give him the victory.

You remember, of course, that everything worked out just right. Goliath, in his anger at the idea of this stripling coming to meet him, pulled back his helmet from his forehead, and David seeing and seizing his advantage, let go the stone. It hit Goliath in his forehead, and he fell like a mighty oak. David at once seized the giant's own sword and killed him.

This is the record. The thing that impresses me about this tonight, dear friends, is the simplicity of the methods that God uses—very simple, very simple. God has used simple methods all the way down through. He's using simple methods today. And if you and I want to make 1975 our greatest year in work for God, it will be not by more complicated methods, but by a more simple approach.

"The laws of Christ's kingdom are so simple, and yet so complete, that man-made additions will create confusion. And the more simple our plans for work in God's service, the more we shall accomplish" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7*, page 215.

Our text this evening:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” 2 Corinthians 11:3.

It is this last line that we wish to meditate on—“the simplicity that is in Christ.” Christian simplicity, Christlike simplicity—*this* is to be our experience. When you look at the life of Jesus here in this world, it is indeed an exhibition of much accomplished in simple ways. Christ commanded no army or navy. He built no institutions. He had no publishing house. He had practically nothing that men consider essential.

Don’t misunderstand me, there’s a place for various facilities. God uses them. But in Christ’s mission, He sought to demonstrate how much could be done without these facilities. He sought to make it possible for every person in this world, no matter how poor, no matter how lacking in facilities, to see how he can do something for God as Jesus did. This is what He’s seeking today. I’m impressed with this little statement:

“Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 115.

How many? Thousands can be reached in what way? The most simple, humble way. Many of us here tonight are students seeking to learn more. It’s good to learn more. God wants us to learn every day, something more of His truth and how to work for souls. But in our search for knowledge, we must never forget that God is ready and willing to use us *right now* with what we have if we’ll consecrate it to Him. And if we are forever pursuing and never attaining, if we are forever reaching and never actually grasping, life can go by with little accomplished. Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way.

“The most intellectual, those who are looked upon and praised as the world’s most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words that flow from the heart of one who loves God and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things which his mind contemplates and feeds upon. Often the words well prepared and studied have little influence. But the true, honest words of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, will open the door to hearts that have long been locked” *Ibid*.

This leads me to this thought: God has asked you and me to be His witnesses. And as has often been said, a witness is one who tells what he knows.

Fundamentally there are two great methods of presenting matters. One is by witnessing; the other is by acting. In many schools, multitudes are prepared to act. It may be actually as actors or actresses on the theatrical stage, or it may be in

something modeled too closely after that—to perform as speakers or as singers. This is one way of accomplishing something. The drama and all its imitations certainly get results. But we shall search in vain as we study the life of Jesus for anything remotely like the theatrical. We shall search in vain as we ponder over His training of the 12 for anything that looks like drilling them in performing. His great purpose—never forgotten, always pursued—was to develop in those men an experience, and get them to share that experience with others. Right? This is it, dear friends.

The two methods are mutually exclusive. Sooner or later, those who are seeking to mix them develop so much love for the one method that they abhor and detest the other. The person who becomes an actor finally becomes a polished actor, and is forever imitating, because that is what acting is. The person who seeks an experience with God and shares it in witnessing has no use for acting. He has no use for pretense. Why should he? He has been given a commission to tell what he has seen, share what he has heard, and give to others that which God has given to him. This is one of the five smooth stones which we do well to take from the brook and put in our shepherd's scrip, and place it in the sling and use it to hit the giant with.

I hope that this year, none of us will even attempt to sell somebody else what we have not experienced and appreciated ourselves. We used to hear of the bald-headed barber trying to sell hair tonic. You get the picture, don't you? If we have experienced something in our study of the Word of God, in our acquaintance with Jesus, then as Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate:

“...such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” Acts 3:6.

I'm glad for the simplicity of truth. What do you say?

I've mentioned the drama and acting. The inherent weakness of it is that it is pretense—putting on, and therefore closely related to the false and the fictitious.

Jesus said:

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

The Ninth Commandment commands that we shall not bear false witness. No lie is of the truth. Truth is so simple it needs no adornment, no ornamentation. As someone quaintly said, “It's good to tell the truth because then you don't have to remember what you said.” I'm sure there are a number of political figures in the nation that wished tonight that they had learned that lesson, do you think so? Yes. We may pity them. But oh, my friends, to the extent that we ourselves indulge in false fronts, exaggerated statements; to the extent that we use such methods as acting and drama and fiction, to that extent, whether we know it or not, we are contributing to the enemy's plans to deceive the whole world with his lies.

He sold Eve at the tree of knowledge of good and evil on an experience in which she thought she was rising while she was falling. It was an illusion, wasn't it? A delusion. But she was so deceived that she believed a lie. When we *listen* to a lie, we become affected by it. So the wise man says:

“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge” Proverbs 19:27.

So, another smooth stone that I suggest we pick up from the book tonight and put in our bag is the stone of truth rather than fiction, reality rather than pretense. Closely connected with these two is the great principle of the natural instead of the artificial. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said:

“...Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” Matthew 6:28–29.

How do the flowers grow? In natural simplicity. This is what Jesus wants you and me to cultivate. He wants to develop each life after the particular pattern that Heaven had in mind in our creation. It would be too bad for a violet to try to look like a rose, wouldn't it? If it could think and dream and have ambitions, and even if it should achieve a measure of success, we'd miss the violets, wouldn't we? And I think that in our fondest dreams, our wildest imaginations, it would be hard for us to conceive of a violet *really* making a success of looking like a rose.

Yet the world is filled with people today who are trying to look like others, talk like others, sing like others, and *be* like others. The words that come to mind are such as ape, parrot, imitation. And imitation is always cheap. Sterling silver, the more you polish it, the brighter it shines. But if it's only a little coating on the top, you had better be careful how you rub it. It might show the base metal underneath.

Oh friends, God is calling us to an appreciation of witnessing instead of acting, of truth instead of fiction, of the natural instead of the artificial. Three little stones that we may put in our ammunition sack as we go forth to meet the enemy.

When Christ was only 12 years old, He went with His parents from Nazareth down to Jerusalem, and there in the providence of God, he met the learned scribes and doctors of the law. In the sweetness of childlike simplicity, He asked questions based upon what He had studied of the Old Testament Scriptures. They were amazed at His questions, which showed a penetrating wisdom. They in turn asked Him questions and were again amazed at His answers. It is written:

“As Jesus in the temple solved the mysteries which priests and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this earth children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an astonishment to men who now talk of ‘higher education’” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 202.

It should be the goal of every teacher, every parent, every Sabbath School officer, every church leader to so feed the lambs of the flock, so train the children of the church and the home, that they, like Jesus, like Daniel, like Joseph, shall be able to witness in the freshness and power of natural simplicity. We are not training actors to show off. We're not training performers to be applauded by the crowds. We are training witnesses to share from their own lives what *they* have found in God's Word that solves the problems of human life. This is the witness for which the world is perishing. It is the witness to which God calls us.

Another smooth stone that I would like to have you think of tonight, has to do with motive. There are really only two motives in the world as there are only two leaders in the universe. The two leaders are Christ and Satan. The two motives are love and selfishness. Love is expressed in cooperation. Selfishness finds its manifestation in contest, rivalry, seeking to snatch something from others. To beat, to win in such a way that someone else loses. This is what is behind war, strife, debate; this is what is the root cause of the troubles in every continent on this globe tonight. Whether it's class against class, race against race, nation against nation, religion against religion, or person against person, *this* is what is responsible.

God is going to have a people in this closing hour, that demonstrate, in their own experience, a complete deliverance from the motive of selfish rivalry. He will have a people that reveal in every act of life the motive of love. Love revealed in unselfish ministry. Love revealed in sacrifice. Love revealed in intercessory prayer. Love revealed in tender pleas to accept the Savior. This is *why* God has called us to be medical missionaries—because there's so much sickness, and unselfish love seeks ways to heal, to relieve. But it is possible for the very efforts to help people with physical problems to be so perverted by the enemy that instead of medical *missionary* work there is medical *mercenary* work, and the very work that God gave us to reveal His unselfish love becomes instead the means of enriching a few at the expense of many, and thus hiding the image of unselfish love that Jesus intended His church to reveal.

Are you willing, for Jesus' sake, to be loving in every act of life in a way that leaves you poor? Jesus was born in a manger. Jesus grew up in the home of a peasant. But Jesus was poor *all* His life. And don't misunderstand me; God has used rich men. Abraham was rich, Solomon was rich. But Jesus, in giving us an example of how *everybody* could work for God, chose to live the life of the poorest all the way through that there should be no *question* about His witness. That there should be no uncertainty about not only what He was doing, but why He was doing it. He was doing it to reveal the love of God, and He chose to do it in this unselfish way.

It's a wonderful thing to love others so much that we don't want to beat them. We wouldn't want to win if it meant that they would lose. We wouldn't want to advantage ourselves if it meant to disadvantage them. Is that practical, or is it just something to write songs about and compose poems about and preach sermons about? Will it work on Monday and Wednesday as well as on the Sabbath? What do you think, friends?

This is what the early church demonstrated. This was the power of Pentecost. As that time came when in Heaven, Christ was inaugurated as Priest

and King, here on earth His church, thank God, had reached the place where they were all of one accord in one place.

I've been speaking of this principle as it's manifested in money matters—remuneration. But there's a closer test than anything financial. It is the test of position. Do you know the disciples readily left their nets, and Matthew left his job with the internal revenue service to be with Jesus in His work, didn't they? They were willing to go around with Jesus and be comparatively homeless and poverty-stricken. They didn't leave Him.

But do you know, there was one thing that Jesus had the hardest time to getting through to those men on; do you know what it was? It was the matter of who was to be first. Who was to be first. Over and over again, as we listen to the tape recording of their sessions, we hear coming back—who's to be first? Who's to be first? And Jesus never answered that question by saying, Well John seems to keep closest to me he'll be first. Peter seems to be the easiest to express himself; he'll be first. Judas has a smart financial mind. He'll be first. No. Jesus never picked one out and said he'll be first. The other disciples doubtless would have accepted it, if reluctantly and grudgingly. But Christ never tried to answer that question.

Instead, He tried to teach them an entirely different principle—one of living to *serve* rather than to *command*. He who is greatest among you, He said, will be your servant. And finally, in the tragedies of Gethsemane and Calvary, they learned the lesson.

Then in the 10 days in the upper room, that lesson was graven deep into their hearts. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were not only at the place where they were willing to give all their property and their lives; they were willing, my dear friend, each one to serve in the humblest way. How is it with us? Are we willing for self to be humbled?

“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.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? Won't it *be* wonderful? Will it happen? Oh yes, it's going to happen, friend. You and I can get in on it if we will. But we cannot do it practicing acting instead of having an experience and witnessing. We cannot do it borrowing the weapons of fiction, and thus diluting truth. We cannot do it following the artificial in fashions, in lifestyle, exalting man instead of the Creator. We cannot do it appealing in our own hearts, or others, to the motives of rivalry and contest. We cannot do it making the dollar sign the great goal. We cannot do it striving for position even in the church and work of God.

All those worldly methods must be laid aside. All those carnal weapons must be abandoned. We must leave the armor of King Saul and take the shepherd's sling and those smooth stones from the brook. The acme of simplicity, and thus in this closing warfare with the dragon, the church of God, like little David, will go forth with

the sling and those smooth stones of truth and love and experience rather than an acted, learned part.

May I read again what I read at the beginning?

“Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way. Those who are looked upon and praised as the world’s most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words that flow from the heart of one who loves God and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things which his mind contemplates and feeds upon. Often the words well prepared and studied have little influence. But the true, honest words of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, will open the door to hearts that have long been locked” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 115.

Let’s enter into the reality of truth, the beauty of love. Let’s enter in this year as never before to the simplicity of Christ. What do you say? This is what all Heaven is waiting for us to do so that angels can work with us—speaking through our voices and working with our hands.

Now, in order that we may do this, there are two simple things that we need to experience in the simplest way; *then*, we can reach others through those same two simple steps. The first is a full surrender. The second is to have faith and express it by believing God. In each of these we need to emphasize the simple.

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus pictures Himself as standing at the door knocking. He says that if you open the door, what’ll He do? Come in. That’s the surrender of the will.

In *Messages to Young People*, page 30, I read this statement:

“The surrender of 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.

In thousands of offices and consultation rooms, men and women are seeking professional advice to solve their problems—many of which can be solved in no other way than a full surrender to Jesus Christ. Oh friends, Have you made a full surrender to Jesus? Have you given your life completely to the Lord and said, “Anywhere You want me to go, I’ll go. Anything You want me to do, I’ll do. Whatever You want me to say, I’ll say. If there’s anything You want me to give up, Lord, it’s already Yours.” This is the simple step of full surrender. And closely connected with it is the simple faith to believe God, for it is written:

“What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” Mark 11:24.

So we're to choose to make a full surrender to Christ, and that's a simple thing. We're to choose to believe that He keeps His Word and accept it, and that's a simple thing.

The messenger to the remnant heard the angels say, "Some tried too hard to believe." Faith is so simple, we look above it. We're looking at simplicity tonight in its various applications. And in these two steps which involve the person's experience with God of surrender and faith, simplicity is so important. Like a little child, we can give ourselves to Jesus. And like a little child believing its father and mother, we can say, "Lord, I believe."

We do not need the intricate, hairsplitting hours upon hours, trying to explore all the possible implications theologically of this position or that position. What we need is a simple surrender to God, and a simple belief that He accepts us according to His Word. Then like Samuel, we can say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant hears."

How many of you tonight, because Jesus loves you and died for you, because you choose to respond to that love, this first Sabbath of the New Year, we'll send Him the word, "Lord, I surrender all"? May I see your hands? Is that your heart's response? Thank God. Would you also like to send Him the word that you believe He accepts you? Thank the Lord.

[Elder Frazee sings "I Surrender All" and congregation joins him in song.]

[Testimony service]

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