

Path of Life

#0140

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 10, 1959

The 16th Psalm, I love these songs of David, don't you? How good the Lord is to share with us that which He gave over 3,000 years ago to the sweet singer of Israel. I long that this first vespers service of the New Year shall be to someone the difference between success and failure in 1979.

There is somebody here tonight that, may it please God, will get a new sense of direction. It could be you. Listen carefully.

“Preserve me, O God for in Thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to Thee; But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore” Psalm 16.

The thing that keeps people from having a happy new year, the thing that makes it impossible to get the real satisfaction out of life—that which is a barrier—is simply this, my friends: failure to fill the place that God intended and recognizing His leadership. You see, everything in this universe is made for a certain purpose. Nothing is left to chance.

I was noting in *These Times* for January, a wonderful article by my dear friend, George Vandeman. If you haven't read it, be sure and take a look at it, *The Miracle of Flight*. It goes into some of the wonderful providences, the wonderful evidences of God's wisdom and power and love in the way birds are put together, for as he calls it, *The Miracle of Flight*.

But Jesus, you remember, takes that example of the birds, and He says you're of much more value than the fowls. Your heavenly Father looks after the birds, but He thinks a great deal more of *you*. My point is, a bird is made to fly. To

read that article, you'll see there's more to that than building an automobile up in Michigan—a great *deal* more—a very intricate pattern, and successful in its operation.

God has made, I repeat, every creature for a certain purpose. What did He make *you* for? He made you for Himself. He made the birds and the animals and the various things in life for you, but He made *you* for *Himself*. And you will never function, as you should, never know the satisfaction of life, unless you fill the place that He intended—that place in His heart that only you can fill.

This is not just something to write songs and poems about. This is not something to wax enthusiastic about merely in a prayer meeting or social testimony meeting. This pertains to the nitty-gritty of life, the day-by-day meeting the problems of life.

You notice the psalmist says:

“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad... my flesh also shall rest in hope” Psalm 16:8–9.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life...” Psalm 16:11.

God is in the business of personally conducting you through the way of life, guiding along the road as if that were the only job He had to do. And if you will let Him do that, if you will let Him guide you, and if you will understand that it is for Him that you are living and not yourself, this can be the happiest year of your life, my friends. This can really be the happiest year of your life.

Some people are unhappy because they are trying to get what belongs to somebody else. That isn't the way to be happy. Some people are unhappy because they are afraid somebody else is going to get what *they* have. That's something *else* to worry about. If you learn the lesson of this Psalm, you don't have to worry about either one of those. You don't *want* what belongs to anybody *else*.

You know, the Lord settled *that* question in the Ten Commandments. He came down through the commandments about making God first, not making idols, not swearing, remembering the Sabbath. He came down through the various duties to men, to parents, not killing, committing adultery, stealing, or lying. And then, finally, He came to that 10th one. That finished it.

And He said, "I don't want you to covet your neighbor's house. I don't want you to covet your neighbor's wife. I don't want you to covet his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's." (See Exodus 20.) And as I've pondered over it, I've been impressed with this, friends: it isn't merely that He doesn't want us to steal and coveting leads to stealing, but it's this—if you could get what belongs to your neighbor, it wouldn't satisfy you.

There's only one thing that can satisfy you, and that's what belongs to *you*. That's why this whole thing that's filling the world today—this running after divorces

to remarry, and then divorce again, and then remarry is fundamentally wrong. It does not merely break the seventh commandment, it breaks the 10th commandment. People are not satisfied in that program.

God has a way of life for you, from the tiniest detail of your life to those most important decisions—your life work, your life companion, the place you live, the career, all of these things—He has planned out, there on the drawing boards of Heaven. But if you try to get what belongs to somebody else, it will make you miserable *trying* to get it, and then if you *get* it, you'll be *more* miserable.

There's only one way to be happy, my friend, and that is, as I say: to do the work that God has given *you* to do and to be happy in making *Him* happy. Then, as I say, there are people who worry about or fear that what they *should* have they won't get. Either because circumstances seem to conspire against them or other human beings stand in their road. The Bible is full of precious experiences indicating that there's nothing about that you need to worry about.

I think of David, the man who wrote this Psalm we are studying. You remember when he was only a teenager, the prophet of God came down there to Bethlehem and anointed him, and let Him know that He was going to be the king over Israel. But there were years that went by after that when, instead of being king, he was chased by *the* king—King Saul.

There he was, having to flee for his life, first one place, and then another. I suppose he could have been tempted to feel, "Well, what did that anointing of the prophet mean anyway? Am I really going to be king? I'm a fugitive now. If I'm not careful, I'll lose my life." No. God inspired him to write:

"I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad... my flesh also shall rest in hope... Thou wilt show me the path of life" Psalm 16:8, 9.

And so it proves God took all those experiences during those years when he was fleeing from Saul and used those experiences to train him for the throne. God never forgot what His goal was. God never for a moment turned aside from what *He* had in mind to get David ready to be king, but David needed some work on the lathe. He wasn't ready. And so in God's providence, He used the very opposition, the very obstacles to develop in David that faith, that patience, that love which finally fitted him to occupy the throne of Israel.

And then, Joseph, again a man that God was training for the throne. His brothers heard of his dreams which Joseph, perhaps unwisely, shared with them. They said, "We'll fix that. That man's not going to rule over *us*." He's one of the younger ones of the family, and in those days, age counted for more than it does today.

So they said, "We'll fix that," and they decided to kill him. Then they thought better of that and decided to make a little money on the deal and sold him for a slave. And the Lord said, in effect, Very well, if that's the way you feel about it to get

Joseph away, we'll take care of that. We will use the very thing that you have done to make his dreams impossible of fulfillment; we will use those circumstances to bring about his training for the throne, and the time will come when all those dreams will be fulfilled.

Was it wonderful, friends? Wonderful? Well I wonder, is there anybody here tonight that is training for the throne? I hope so. For to those in Laodicea who will listen to the knock of the Savior is the promise given:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with My Father in His throne” Revelation 3:21.

Training for the throne? Yes, my dear friends. Boys and girls, youth, older ones, training for the throne. But, we must be willing to endure the discipline that Joseph went through in Potiphar's house, and in the dungeon. We must be willing to endure the discipline that David endured fleeing over the hills and mountains of Judea, and hiding in caves. And whatever circumstances God permitted to teach him those lessons.

Is God taking you through some difficulties? Does He bring you to some disappointments?

Oh, you say, “Yes, that's the trouble. That's the trouble. If I could only, if I could only, if I could only?”

Only what?

“Well, arrange things like I think they ought to be arranged and get the cooperation of the people who are in my way, then I think we could make progress.”

Don't fool yourself, my friend. Don't fool yourself. God is managing things far better than you have any idea of.

Let me read something here that I think is wonderful from this little book, *Our High Calling*:

“We do not always consider that the sanctification we so earnestly desire and for which we pray so earnestly is brought about through the truth and, by the providence of God, in a manner we least expect” *Our High Calling*, page 313.

Like some of those problems you were talking about, Brother Wilson. You didn't order those from Sears Roebuck. They didn't come that way. “In a manner we least expect.”

“When we look for joy, behold there is sorrow. When we expect peace, we frequently have distrust and doubt, because we find ourselves plunged into trials we cannot

avoid. In these trials we are having the answers to our prayers” *Ibid*.

Oh, it isn’t that God *isn’t* answering our prayers; He *is* answering our prayers.

“In these trials we are having the answers to our prayers. In order for us to be purified, the fire of affliction must kindle upon us, and our will must be brought into conformity to the will of God... God sees it best to put us under a course of discipline which is essential for us before we are fit subjects for the blessing we crave” *Ibid*.

Oh, I want to endure the discipline. What do you say, friends? I want to endure the discipline and let God handle it. I repeat, we do not order these things; we do not arrange our lives. You know, when men write biographies of those who have succeeded, they like to tell about some boy who, when he was just a young fellow, he set his goal to be this or that, to be the president of the United States, or to be a millionaire, or to find the north pole, or something else, and how he just bent all his energies and finally succeeded.

Well, that’s the way the world writes it. I wouldn’t say it’s wrong for people of the world to do that. But oh, I am so glad to be in something infinitely better than that. My *Father* has planned *my* life. As I look back over my life, I do not see something that I set *my* mind to do, achieve; I see something more beautiful and more glorious—my heavenly Father’s plans being worked out. I want to fit into them and let Him work out the pattern of life that He has set. What do you say?

“Our plans are not always God’s plans... Often our plans fail that God’s plans for us may succeed” *Ministry of Healing*, page 473.

So, this evening, we’re wanting to lay aside every thought of planning our own life selfishly, or even we might think unselfishly, to carry out our ways and to get things done as we expect. We are seeking to learn this precious lesson that if we set the Lord always before us, *He* will show us the path of life.

Take another wonderful promise; turn to Proverbs the third chapter:

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” Proverbs 3:5–6.

Will He do it? He says He will. Listen, if He won’t, friend, this whole thing is a fraud and a fable; we’d just as well forget it. I don’t know what we’d turn to, but there’s no use in depending upon something which isn’t so. But, thank God, this is so. What do you say? Let’s trust Him with everything we’ve got.

Let us not delay learning the lesson that His discipline would bring about. Let us learn the lesson that Joseph learned in Potiphar’s house, and that David learned

on the hills and in the valleys of Judea—to set the Lord always before us and to *accept* the arrangement of His providence.

Notice how it's put here in *Ministry of Healing*:

“Many are dissatisfied with their lifework. It may be that their surroundings are uncongenial; their time is occupied with commonplace work, when they think themselves capable of higher responsibilities; often their efforts seem to them to be unappreciated or fruitless; their future is uncertain. Let us remember that while the work we have to do may not be our choice, it is to be accepted as God's choice for us. Whether pleasing or unpleasing, we are to do the duty that lies nearest. ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.’ Ecclesiastes 9:10” *Ministry of Healing*, pages 472–473.

Oh, my dear friend, it is faithfulness in meeting the problems that we're surrounded with, it is in this that God is leading us on through to successfully accomplishing what He has in mind for tomorrow. To have a happy new year means by faith to assert that this is so tonight, and to accept the discipline of His providence, not chafe under it, not be restless under it, but to, by faith, say:

“I have set the LORD always before me... Therefore my heart is glad... Thou wilt show me the path of life”
Psalm 16:8–9, 11.

Jesus can help us to do this. While we are learning these lessons, God is arranging circumstances clear outside of our knowledge, or of any ability of ours to control, to bring about the very thing that He sees our hearts really desire.

One of the poets has put in verse this beautiful thought of God working out His will:

Serene, I fold my hands and wait.
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea.
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave unto the sea,
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,

Can keep my own away from me.
~John Burroughs

If God intends for you to be rich, friends, there is nobody in this world can keep you from it, if you're willing. But if God *doesn't* want you to be rich, it's because He has some other blessing in some other line. You don't have to worry about *people* keeping you from what God wants you to do or to be. No man can keep you from accomplishing the mission for which you were born. You are the only one who can frustrate that.

If you are willing, God will take the circumstances, and even the opposition of men and devils, and use those as His vehicles, His *tools* to accomplish that for which you were born. I think this is wonderful. What do you say?

Here's another one I like:

"The things we may so much desire to do may become a reality after God has proved us in the school of experience, and among our greatest blessings may be counted the thing we were not privileged to do, that would have barred the way from doing the very things best calculated to prepare us for a higher work... Our devised plans often fail that God's plans for us may be a complete success. Oh, it is in the future life we shall see the tangles and mysteries of life, that have so annoyed and disappointed our fond hopes, explained. We will see that the prayers and hopes for certain things which have been withheld have been among our greatest blessings" *Our High Calling*, page 318.

And so this evening, this first vesper service of the New Year, I'm thankful for the privilege once again of putting my little hand in His great hand, and saying, "Lord, you will show me the path of life—more abundant life. You will lead me, not necessarily on the mountain, it may be through the valley; not necessarily in bright sunshine, it may be in the darkness. But, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'" (See Psalm 23:4.)

Ah, dear ones, there's a struggle going on in some heart here tonight. I cannot read your mind, but I've worked with the Spirit of God for over half a century, friends, and I know that God works with human hearts in dealing with the problems of life. And I have shared with you some very simple and practical, yet deep and far-reaching things tonight.

What is going on in your mind and heart? Is there surrender there? Is there faith? Surrender says, "Lord, anything you want, that's what I choose. Anything you desire, Lord, that's my decision." That's surrender.

Faith says, "Lord, I believe You'll work it out for Your glory and my good. I believe You have control of my life, and that no man or devil can hinder the working out of Your will." Faith says, "Therefore, I will trust and not be afraid."

Now, what can you do with a man that has that double decision settled, nailed, and clinched on the other side? What can you do with him? The Devil can't do anything with him, friends; he's baffled. The Devil tries, but God takes everything the Devil does to a man like that and turns it out for good to work out God's glory and that man's best good.

So this evening, I hope, oh I trust, that you will settle these two things: First, that God's will shall be your will. Second, to settle it in your heart that you know that God is looking after you, you're not some orphan left to drift in the sad, and cold, and selfish world. You're here as the son, the daughter, of the infinite God, and *all* the resources of Heaven are back of you as you seek to do the thing you were born for. And you *know* that God is going to work it out.

Let me just ask, friends, is there anybody here tonight who, as you have faced these wonderful promises and these beautiful principles, God has helped you to make a decision tonight? If there is somebody like that, I wish you would raise your hand; I would like to see. Thank God. Well, then I didn't give the study in vain, did I? No, sir. If there was just one person who got it, but here are quite a number. Oh, I thank God for it! Don't you? I thank God for it.

[Elder Frazee sings "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" as the congregation joins him.]

The most beautiful example of what we have studied tonight is in the life of Jesus Himself. He came here from the glory of Heaven, emptied Himself, and allowed His life to be guided by the Father through the Spirit every day of His earthly sojourn. Every day, He put *His* will in the hand of His Father to do and to be what Heaven had planned, and it led Him, my friends, into deep sorrow. But it was through that sorrow that He received the ministry of consolation. It led Him into the valley of death, but it was through that that He received the power to destroy him that had the *power* of death—that is the Devil.

And so He is calling us, beckoning us, tonight, to come and walk with Him the path of service that leads to sacrifice, the path of ministry that leads to the cross, to share with Him in the glad assurance that filled His heart, for He said:

"He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him"
John 8:29.

Shall we please our Lord this New Year? How many would like to send Him the word tonight? God bless you, every one.

[The following comments were made by Elder Frazee during testimony time.]

Listen to this quote:

"Faith takes God at His word, not asking to understand the meaning of the trying experiences that come" *Gospel Workers*, page 261.

That's real faith, friends. We don't even say, "Lord, why in the world did *this* happen?" No, we know it happened in His providence.

Now, if everybody here tonight would fully learn these lessons, then we wouldn't have any more trials the rest of the year, would we? No, we'd have the trials, but we'd be *prepared* for them. I don't mean that we would be prepared in the sense we would know they were coming, and they'd be what we expected. To prepare for the unexpected, that's what these blessings are designed to accomplish—to prepare us for the unexpected.

“Not what I wish to be,
Nor where I wish to go,
For who am I that I should choose my way?
The Lord shall choose for me.
'Tis better far I know.
So let Him bid me go or stay.”
~From the hymn “Submission”

Precious Lord, we thank Thee this first vespers service of the New Year, that we have gotten a glimpse of Thy interesting plan to take us from where we are to where You want us to be. And by Thy grace, we've put our little hands in Thy great hand that Thou mayest lead us in the path of life, of success. If it be through the valley, keep our eye on the mountain top; if it be in the dungeon, may we know Thou art training us for the throne. And for Thine own dear sake, our Father, we shall count the toils sweet and the sacrifice a privilege. For Thou has given all for us, and we do, just now, give all for Thee. We thank Thee. Amen.

God bless you all. Happy Sabbath!

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