

Peace, Joy, and Rest

#0198

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 24, 1976

I have a great longing, brothers and sisters, that every one of us shall know the peace and the joy and the rest that is our privilege to enjoy. That does not come through outward circumstances.

The federal government has been working for at least a generation to try to make everybody happy through handouts. To date, it's far from successful. You'll agree with me. There was never in the history of the 200 years of this country so much unrest and so much dissatisfaction.

Jesus said to His disciples as they were around the table that night in the upper room:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" John 14:26.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

Oh, what beautiful words! Dear friends, you and I are in training to sing in dungeons and in caves. By the way, speaking of caves, be sure you read in the last *Review*, the article on "Cave Dwellers" by one of the editors of the *Review*. I've never heard of such a thing or thought of it in all my life. But Elder Newfelt, one of the editors of the *Review*, has gotten from one of the Ellen G. White manuscripts a most interesting description. In fact, it's so good I've got to share the thought with you.

Do you know that when God's people come out of the caves just before Jesus comes, a lot of the wicked people are going to run to get in them? The same caves—here read it. And they're going to find in those caves Seventh-day Adventist books and papers. Some of the people, as they read them, are going to hold them up to the preachers who have led them astray and say: "You are the ones that kept us from accepting this message." Read it there in the *Review*. By the way, the *Review* is a good paper to keep up with. This is interesting. But what I started to say was, we're getting ready to sing in dungeons and in caves. We are getting ready to be happy under all circumstances of persecution, difficulties, cold, heat, pain, persecution, and really mean it, aren't we?

These two principles that I've been studying with you in these Friday night vespers of truth and love are God's great principles to give us rest. That's what they're for. They're not to give us bondage. Relief and release from the strain and

stress of fiction, drama, unreality, imitation of others. Relief and release from the strain of competition, rivalry, and all that sort of thing. This really rests. As we studied the other night, Jesus says:

“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.

Now, this work is a laboratory in which we learn to apply these principles. That’s why we are in the home we’re in, in the department we’re in, in the classes we’re in, in the church or branches we’re in. All these are a part of God’s strategy to develop in our hearts a great appreciation of truth and love.

Let me take you right to the text that I want to study with you 1 John 19. This is Jesus in Pilate’s judgment hall. The Roman governor is having a hard time with himself, a hard time with the Jews, and he doesn’t know what to do with Jesus. But the multitude outside are clamoring for Jesus’ blood. They want to crucify Him. Jesus is in there, and Pilate’s talking to Him.

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speak Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?” John 19:8–10.

Don’t you know who I am? I could let you go, or I can crucify you. Dare You stand there and not talk to me? I’ve got You in my power. You’d better get afraid fast.

Was Jesus afraid? No, He wasn’t afraid. But from a heart full of love, He condescended in a further effort to reach Pilate’s heart. Now notice His answer:

“Jesus answered, Thou could have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...”
John 19:11

“If you have any power over Me, My Father gave it to you.”

Now let’s go back to the preceding chapter and notice some other words that Jesus had already said to Pilate:

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence” John 18:36.

The soldiers of this world do what? They fight. But the soldiers of Christ don't fight. Peter forgot that. He didn't understand it. He tried to fight in the garden. What did Jesus say? "Put up the sword. It's dangerous, Peter; you're liable to get hurt if you do. And it's unnecessary—My Father has 12 legions of angels. But more important than all that, Peter, the cup which My Father hath given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?"

Peter thought he was interfering with the Devil, but he was really interfering with God when he got that sword out. Wasn't he? And Jesus had to exert His divine power to fix up that ear that Peter's sword had cut off. Wonderful Savior!

How do you and I learn these lessons? We learn them in the kitchen, on the farm, in the sanitarium, in the classroom, in the home, meeting the problems of dealing with selfish people. Or are there any selfish people at Wildwood?

Somebody says, "Oh, yes, I know one." Yes, I suppose you might make a list of some people. Had you thought of them as God's tools, God's equipment of the laboratory here? And Christ has put you and me here with selfish people to learn to be *unselfish*. That's right.

Somebody says, "Oh, I think I could learn it so much better if I were in a world of unselfish people." If God thought so, He'd have a spaceship here tonight and take you to one of them. He's got a million, million, million *worlds* full of unselfish people. But Eden does not furnish the situation, the circumstances, the atmosphere necessary to develop unselfishness in selfish people.

Unselfishness is not something you catch like measles or flu. It isn't something that rubs off like wet paint. It's an experience that begins in conversion and is developed more and more in the daily conversion that we call sanctification.

Jesus in His earth life demonstrated how we develop that character. He came and took our nature. He never sinned, but He was surrounded with sin all the time. Think of the home that Jesus grew up in. His older brothers and sisters, were they nice to Him? Not always. At least He didn't get spoiled, did He? No, He had opposition, persecution, misunderstanding, and difficulty. But through it all, He was demonstrating and developing more and more that beautiful character that shone the brightest in that dark night in Gethsemane and Calvary.

And here we see Him here talking to Pilate. Pilate says, "Aren't you afraid of me? You'd better step around and do what I tell you because I could kill you, or I could let you lose if you'll just talk nice."

Jesus said, "No, you could have no power at all unless My Father gave it to you."

When we face our judges and face the mobs, we must have that settled and secure in our inmost souls. And we learn it, I repeat, in the daily experiences of life. And with it goes this statement:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of

this world, then would My servants fight..." John 18:36

Is this practical? If I can get more from myself by fighting for it, shall I fight for it? If I can get a higher place for myself by pushing ahead of somebody else, shall I do that? You remember that Peter and John and James, and those other disciples still hadn't learned this lesson we are studying tonight after three years with the Master. Because when they went into that last supper, they were pushing and jostling, trying to prove who was the greatest.

Who was the greatest? It was according to who you asked. If you asked Peter, who does Peter say? Peter. If you asked John, who does John say? John. If you asked Judas, he would say Judas. That's an interesting thing that among all the 12, there wasn't any party—there wasn't the Judas party or the Peter party. There were 12 parties. Christ hadn't picked putty.

Some people that come to Wildwood wonder why everybody isn't an angel. Well, Jesus is running a program here like He ran 2,000 years ago. He's getting some people ready for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And that's not always speaking in tongues, dear friends. It's speaking in that tongue that Paul spoke about when he said: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love," it doesn't mean a thing.

And what does love do? Love seeketh not her own. If Jesus were on this campus as a student... was Christ ever a student? Oh, yes, for 30 years. Or as a worker... was Christ a worker? He was a manual worker most of His time. He would be seeking all the while just what He sought at Nazareth—to do all He could to share the burdens of others and then beside that, to help them in a spiritual way. He was never pushing for Himself in His own rights. You'll find that in *Desire of Ages*:

"Jesus did not contend for His rights" *The Desire of Ages*,
page 89.

Now, if He's living in me, will I contend for my rights? Well, how can I tell if I contend for my rights or not? I'll tell you how I can tell: when the only way I can get my rights is to contend for them. That's the only way I can tell. And this is exactly why God doesn't ship me off to a world where everybody is unselfish. I would have no opportunity to learn not to contend for my rights. The only place I can learn it is where there is selfishness to a greater or less degree.

Jesus demonstrated this at Nazareth. His disciples learned it living with Him those three years. But each man learned it—don't forget it—surrounded by 11 other selfish people. Didn't they?

Peter and James and John, Judas, and Matthew, and Thomas gave their exhibitions of selfishness again and again right up to Gethsemane and the cross. Didn't they? And Christ's remedy wasn't to ship them. Thank God, except for Judas, they all stuck with Him until they learned the lesson. I want to stick with Jesus until I learn the lesson. What do you say? Jesus did not contend for His rights.

If I were the Devil, do you know what I would do right now? I'd slip up to somebody sitting here and say, "That's just a pep talk to get you to take it lying down and not talk back." That's what I'd do if I were the Devil.

I don't try to argue with the Devil, friends. The Devil knows nothing about this principle of love. He denies that there is such a thing. The Devil feels that there's an ulterior motive in everything that God does. That's his charge. But oh, it's a wonderful thing to get so in love with the principle of love that we'd rather die loving than live defending our rights and ourselves and our own way. That's right.

Notice this statement here in *Mount of Blessing*:

"Far better would it be for us to suffer than to inflict upon ourselves the torture of retaliation..." *Mount of Blessing*, page 17.

I'd a whole lot rather suffer if I understand this principle. I'd rather suffer by my brother wounding *me* than suffer by me wounding my brother. Do you see? So if my brother starts to wound me, do run quickly and wound him before he can wound me? Or do I wait until he wounds me and wound him back fast to teach him a lesson? Oh, not with a gun or a sword, of course; we wouldn't do that, we're too civilized, but with the tongue, with a look.

I'm not thinking so much tonight of anger or malice. I am thinking, dear ones, of something that is nicer than that. I'm thinking of our human tendency to contend for our rights.

Someone has said that self-preservation is the first law of nature, but it's not the first law of divine nature. It's the first law of selfish nature. But if Jesus had had that either the first or the last principle in His life, He never would have come to earth to suffer and to die, would He?

Now I want you to turn over to 1 Peter, the 2nd chapter, beginning with the 21st verse. I want you to look at this line and ask yourself what it means anyway.

"For even hereunto were ye called..."

Did you answer the call? What was the call?

"...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" 1 Peter 2:21.

Christ did what? Suffered. And He left us what? An example that we should what? Follow His steps. Did you know they're blood-stained steps? He left His footprints on the trail marked in blood.

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously" 1 Peter 2:22–23.

This is another way of saying that He didn't contend for His rights. When His rights were invaded, He didn't say, "I'll get even with you one way or another."

Now, the last line is the key to it all. It says instead of doing all those threatening things, those fighting things, those defending things, he committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Who is that? God. God was His Father. Don't you wish God was *your* Father so you could trust Him to look after you the way Jesus did? Or would you be willing for God, as your Father, to look after you the way He looked after Jesus?

Did He let Him get spit on? Did He let the people pull His hair out? Crown Him with thorns? Beat Him? Kick Him? Kill Him?

If you committed yourself to God and He didn't take any better care of you than that, would you stay with Him, or would you say, "I guess it's about time I started looking after myself"?

Do you know the last words of Jesus on the cross? "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit," I commit My life. He stuck with that attitude to the very end.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." Philippians 2:9-10.

He went to the bottom; God has put Him at the top. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Oh, dear ones, somewhere in this world, God has 144,000; whether a literal number or symbolic, it really doesn't make that much difference to me. But listen: God's got them in training for the throne tonight around this world. Oh, I hope some of them are right here tonight. What do you say? We're told that we're to strive with all our power to be among the 144,000, to have that character, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. [Elder Frazee is knocking on the lectern.]

Companions of the Lamb, soldiers of the cross, fighting not with swords, but with love; fighting not with their fists to defend their rights, not retaliating, suffering as Jesus suffered, glorying in the glory of love.

Steven got hold of this, and when they stoned him, Steven prayed for the men who were throwing the rocks at him. Didn't he? Yes. He didn't learn that lesson that day; he'd learned it before.

I'll tell you a little secret, folks. I said a while ago, the Lord had some selfish people here so we could learn some things. But things really aren't selfish enough here to learn all I'm talking about. And if you and I will get through the kindergarten here, the Lord will probably promote us to some situation where things are harder than they are here.

Could it happen? Oh, yes, it could happen. I pray that we'll graduate from this preparatory school. *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 16:

"It is the love of self that destroys our peace. While self is all alive we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult. But when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 16.

Here's a blind man. Bad boys make faces at him. Does he make faces back at them? What's the matter with him? No, he doesn't see them.

Here's a deaf man. People say mean things about him. Does he hit them? Why not? He doesn't hear it.

When we are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult.

Oh, happy blindness! Oh, holy deafness! And this is not talking a literal. This is a figure of speech, of course, and what an apt and wonderful figure of speech. It's not talking about becoming stoical or stone-like.

It hurt Jesus when they treated Him meanly. But why did it hurt Him? It hurt Him to see *them* hurting themselves. That's what the hurt is.

Let's have a little prayer time. Shall we? I want to learn this, don't you?

[A season of prayer follows, and Elder Frazee offers closing comments.]

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