

My Hero

#0298

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 2, 1977

“...His name shall be called Wonderful” Isaiah 9:6.

I wonder if any of you ever had a hero sometime in your life. I suppose everybody has. When we're little children, although we may not know the word "hero," usually somewhere along the line, father and mother are big heroes in our thinking. Happy is the child that has that experience. Somewhere as our horizon begins to expand, our acquaintance spreads, other people become a part of our world. For reasons which we may not fully understand, somebody becomes a special someone in our lives. And happy is the young person that has a hero or heroes that are worth emulating.

I was looking up this word 'hero' in the dictionary, and one of the definitions gives us this idea that a hero is one idealized, or held in esteem for superior qualities or deeds of any kind. That's a hero.

The Bible is a gallery of heroes. Hebrews 11 is filled with one name after the other of heroes of faith. Heaven has its hall of fame, not filled with the Alexanders and Julius Caesars and Napoleons and Hitlers, but with men like Enoch and Noah, Joseph and Moses, Daniel and David, Peter and Paul, Mary of Nazareth and Mary of Bethany, Esther, Deborah, Miriam. All these are among the great heroes, and there're many more from Genesis to Revelation. It is in God's order that as we became acquainted with these narratives of sacred history, that there kindles in our breast a desire to be like this one or like that one or like another one.

In our contemporary lives and the people around us, we find those that inspire us, but sooner or later, some hero disappoints us. We read about Abraham and his wonderful faith. Then we find him caught in a lie, and down he goes. We read of Moses' wonderful experiences. Then we see him losing his temper because of the long rebellion of the children of Israel. We think of David and his exploits, and then we see him fall before the tempter. We think of Peter and his wonderful confession of faith in the Messiah. Then we see him move to deny his Master with cursing and swearing by the curious questions of a maidservant. Human nature disappoints us. Doesn't it? And so we find it in the lives of those about us.

I remember when I was a little fellow; there came a man into our community where I was growing up. He was a colporteur and he used to visit our home. We were poor, but my parents always made people welcome. My brother and I took a great fancy to this fellow. I suppose because he played with us and talked to us. I imagine that that had a lot to do with it. I remember somehow or another, we got hold of his picture and writing in my childish scrawl I wrote on the back of that about the best man in the world. He was my hero right then, you understand. Well, you know it happens. And as years went on I found out he was quite an extremist. But

my picturing him as a hero when I was a smaller boy caused me for a while to be somewhat effected by some of his extreme ideas.

I thank the Lord for balancing influences of other heroes—that's another subject. I thank the Lord that in my teens I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with such heroes of faith as Elder Luther Warren; Elder R. S. Owen, the first Bible teacher at Loma Linda Medical College; Elder John Burden, the man that God used to establish Loma Linda and other of the California sanitariums; Elder John Tindall who trained me in the ministry of medical evangelism; Elder W. C. White, Sister White's son; Elder Meade McGuire, and others that I might mention. What a blessing it was to me in my teens and twenties to have those men as heroes of faith.

But as I came to know them, some of them more intimately than others, I found that they weren't perfect. I discovered that some of them, at least, had some human weaknesses. And if we could look deep in the hearts of men and women, the real, perfect ideal is found only in Jesus Christ. So, tonight, I want to introduce Him to you as my Hero. "His name shall be called wonderful."

We're entering into that season of the year when millions are celebrating the birth of Christ. That Scripture, Isaiah 9:6, is one of the great announcements of the birth of the Messiah.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful..." Isaiah 9:6.

What a wonderful hero Jesus is.

As I was thinking about this subject, I thought, "I wondered if that word 'hero' is anywhere in the Bible?" I didn't think it was in the King James, but sure enough, I found it in one of the other more modern translations. You'll find it in Psalm 45:3 in the Jerusalem Bible. Christ is called a hero. Some of the other translations in this verse call Him "the Mighty One." This is the thought of Christ as the hero, the Might One, the Wonderful One; the One that we can emulate without any fear of disappointment.

Let me share with you a wonderful statement from the book *Education*:

"Of Him all the excellences manifest in the earth's greatest and noblest souls were reflections" *Education*, page 73.

Ponder that concept. In Jesus we find the great Original of light and love and life. And all the men and women that have ever lived in this world that are worth knowing, their excellences are but reflections of that wonderful life.

"Of Him all the excellences manifest in the earth's greatest and noblest souls were reflections. The purity and beneficence of Joseph, the faith and meekness and long-suffering of Moses, the steadfastness of Elisha, the

noble integrity and firmness of Daniel, the ardor and self-sacrifice of Paul, the mental and spiritual power manifest in all these men, and in all others who had ever dwelt on the earth, were but gleams from the shining of His glory. In Him was found the perfect ideal" *Ibid*.

"In Him was found the perfect ideal." And so tonight, as I say, I'd like to have us meditate on Christ as the hero, for He's the only One that we can look to and find transforming power by beholding.

"...with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" 2 Corinthians 3:18.

One of the great reasons God lets us have heroes is so that our souls may be stirred to emulate them. In Jesus we find a perfect pattern, an ideal copy. And thank God, we find not merely inspiration to *want* to do it; we find the power to do it.

"...as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" John 1:12.

There's another reason why God wants us to look to Jesus as the hero, as the great Pattern. Sooner or later, as I've suggested, we find disappointments in human beings. Some church elder lets us down. Some pastor disappoints us. Some Sabbath School teacher makes a mistake. Some parent fails a child. Some teacher disappoints a student. You boys and girls, you young people, you've lived very long you've found true what I say, haven't you? What is the answer? I'm sorry that sometimes people are so shortsighted that they say, "Well, if that's religion, I don't want any of it." They forget that God has given us only one copy, and that's Jesus. He's the one perfect example.

In His love and pity, God often allows those in whom we place confidence to fail us so that we will learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm. Looking down the ages, God saw that there were millions that would extol Peter as the rock on which the church was built. He didn't cause Peter to fall, but He did allow the record of it to be put in the Bible so that people might understand that Peter is not the one to build on at all. No, he's not the one to build, and nobody else is.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" 1 Corinthians 3:11.

We'll build on the Rock, the solid Rock; on Jesus the Rock of ages. He is the great Pattern, the perfect Hero. Let us find in Him illumination, inspiration, power, and thank God He never disappoints us.

What a pity then to stumble over the failings of others. What a pity to say, "My father claims to be a Christian, but I know too much about him to have confidence. My mother, she's a professed believer, but you ought to see her sometimes" or, "I heard one of my teachers saying such and such, and I know that isn't the Christian

way," or, "I say the Pastor is doing such and such a thing, I can't believe that's the way Jesus would do." Dear youth, and older ones, if God has given you the ability to discern, with that comes the responsibility to follow the light which shows the difference between right and wrong. In the judgment, believe me, you will never blame someone else. You will never point out this one or that one and say, "I stand behind them. They failed, that's why I failed." No. Thank God, Jesus is the perfect Pattern, and if we look to Him, looking away from human beings, we can all be saved.

In the book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* in the chapter of "The Spirituality of the Law," is this wonderful passage:

"The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote, He is 'the chiefest among ten thousand... yea, He is all together lovely' (Song of Solomon 5:10–16); of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men' (Psalm 45:2); Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, page 49.

Would you turn please in your hymnal, and I want you to sing just now, and I want you to look at some words: No. 159. These words are taken from the 45th Psalm that we've been quoting from. You notice that these words were written 190 years ago. You might like to know that they were written a Seventh-day Baptist clergyman in Rhode Island, Samuel Stennett:

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Savior's brow;
His head with radiant light is crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

No mortal can with Him compare,
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train."

Is He that to you, my friend? Is He your hero? Is He your leader? Is He the one that inspires in you the desire to be like Him? I repeat, He will never disappoint you. Look at the one that precedes this, No. 158. This comes down from nearly 1,000 years ago:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.
No voice can sing, no heart can frame,

Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Jesus' name,
The Saviour of mankind."

Aren't those beautiful words? Then right across the page, No. 160, another one of 200 years ago:

"Oh Thou in whose presence my soul takes delight,
On whom in affliction I call;
My comfort by day and my song in the night,
My hope, my salvation, my all!"

Each stanza is filled with adoration of Jesus and appreciation of His character, His wonderful love. And so through the Bible and through these hymns that are based upon the sacred Scriptures, we can get glimpses of that wonderful life, that wonderful example, and we can express our appreciation and our response.

Is Jesus your hero? Is He the lover of your soul? Is He the one altogether lovely?

Turn to Psalm 17:15. David sums up the longings of his heart:

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" Psalm 17:15.

In Christ is found satisfaction. So the beloved John says:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" 1 John 3:2.

Have you gotten well enough acquainted with Him that to be like Him would satisfy every desire of the heart? Is this the thing you long for? Is He your hero? Is He the one that represents everything you wish for? Ah, dear ones, if our minds have been illumined, if our hearts have been enlightened, this is true. Is it not?

Make me lonely for Thy presence,
Every earthly friend above;
Make me thirst for Thine indwelling,
Make me hungry for Thy love.

All the beauty that I seek for,
Every treasure I would own;
Thou art these in rich completeness,
They are found in Thee alone.

All the loveliness I long for,
All the best that I would be;
I can never find them elsewhere

Than in Thee, Lord, just in Thee.

This movement, the great movement to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord is soon to go through a terrible crisis—the greatest crisis of the ages. When the world and popular religion on every continent will be joined together to persecute those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. One of the hardest trials in those tests will be when we see those whom we have placed confidence fail us.

“Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat... multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true... trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground...” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 81.*

All who have assumed the ornaments of Christ righteousness but have not been clothed with His beautiful light will be left out. They'll be sifted out, they'll be shaken out.

I repeat, it's going to be a terrible test when brother so and so that we've looked for, looked to, sister so and so that we've admired leave Jesus, leave His commandments, leave His last message, and join with the great world in trampling underfoot God's flag. What will we do then? If human beings have become our heroes rather than Jesus Christ, if we've looked to men and built upon them rather than on Jesus, we'll be swept away in that terrible stream of apostasy. God grant that we shall learn now to build on Jesus alone, what do you say?

There's nothing wrong with being inspired by the good example of others. The apostle Paul writing to his converts said, “Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ.” But he was always encouraging them to look to Jesus. He himself said:

“...God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” Galatians 6:14.

So this evening, friend, I point you to my Hero. I trust He's your Hero, the One who never disappoints. Tell me, if tomorrow you were to face the terrible ordeal I've just described, would it not be, might it not be, will it not be in God's providence if you and I meet some tests where people disappoint us, and we learn to cling close to Jesus' hand, unshaken by the failures of those about us. When we see men and women in whom we've placed confidence falter and fall, let's pray for them. Let's not copy their failures. Let's not criticize them and get bitter or sour. Oh, no. That won't help them and it won't help us, it won't help anybody. The only person it'll make glad is the Devil, and nobody here wants to give him a joy ride, do they? I trust not.

Oh, thank God, we want to make Jesus happy, and we can do it by looking up into His lovely face.

If you haven't already found the happy experience of memorizing some of these hymns of adoration that I called your attention to: 158, 159, and 160, and many others, I invite you to do it. Take a look at another one, 161. It's another one of the great hymns that have come down through the decades 200 years ago. [As found in the Old Hymnal.]

Thank God, haven't we something to be thankful for? Remember, this Hero is your personal friend.

"The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth..." *Steps to Christ*, page 100.

So, you can make Him your intimate friend. He deals with you as though there were no other. He will help you to see some things in Him, in a very personal way, different than anybody else.

I was telling somebody the other day as we were looking at a beautiful rainbow, I said, "Did you know you see a different rainbow than I see?" They hadn't thought of that, but everybody sees a different rainbow. You say, "How come?" You know how the rainbow is made, don't you? The rays from the sunshine upon the drops of moisture, and they're refracted and come to your eye. But the person who is standing next to me is looking at different raindrops refracted than I am.

As you and I look at Jesus, what you see in Him is your particular view; what I see in Him is my particular view. My point is, Christ has a revelation of Himself to give you that He will give to no other.

When we get to Heaven, we will find in personal fellowship with Him a unique experience. We can have a foretaste of it here. Aren't you glad?

[The Appeal and Testimony Service]

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