

Occupy Till I Come

#0386

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 6, 1979

I invite you to turn to Luke the 19th chapter. You will remember that we studied from this chapter a few evenings ago Christ's parable of the pounds. When He gave a similar parable in Matthew 25, He spoke of talents. The lesson is similar, but as you remember, in Matthew 25, He told of the master giving different amounts of talents to different individuals among His servants. But as He told the story in Luke 19, He spoke of each one receiving one pound. And as I pointed out to you two weeks ago, that was what we would consider equivalent to a hundred days' wages, as a laborer would earn at that time in that country.

The interesting thing in the parable of the pounds here in Luke 19 is that although they all started with the same amount, one pound, a hundred days' wages given to them, they ended up with varying amounts.

You remember that when the master came back and called them to account for their stewardship, that one of them who had been given one pound came back with how much? Ten pounds. Another one came back with five pounds. And another one came back with just one pound that he'd saved in a napkin.

Christ uses this to teach us that every one of us has something to use for Him, to invest for Him, and His words are very meaningful in the 13th verse:

"...Occupy till I come" Luke 19:13.

"...Occupy till I come" Luke 19:13.

If I understand that, He means, "Keep busy. Keep busy using what you have. Do not sigh for something that you don't have. Do not miss using what I've given to you. But occupy, use it, until I come."

You and I believe that Christ is coming soon, and that we're going to give an account of our stewardship. I suggest tonight that the lesson of this parable is that Christ is clearly teaching that it is our privilege to have more when we get through than when we start, more when we get through than when we start.

One man started with one pound, and he ended up with how much? Ten. Another man started with one pound and ended up with five. They were commended and were given still more responsibility and authority.

But that man that had not used the master's goods and therefore they were not multiplied was reproved, condemned, and put out. This is what's going to happen to those who fail to learn and practice the lessons of stewardship.

I've been meditating on this some more, and I would like to think with you of the happy conclusion that every one of us can so manage things that we can have more and more. Usually, we think of stewardship as relating to money, and I want you to think of it tonight, including money. I'd like to have you think of the stewardship of strength, of health, of time, of love. For the stewardship of love is basic to all the rest. And so tonight, you might want to call this not the love of wealth, but the wealth of love. Not the love of wealth, but the wealth of love.

You remember that the apostle Paul says:

"For the love of money is the root of..." 1 Timothy 6:10.

What?

"...all evil..." 1 Timothy 6:10.

God never intended we should love money, make it an object of adoration. But it doesn't mean that money's wrong or that to possess it doesn't need to be anything but a blessing, a great blessing.

And so, tonight as we think of the stewardship of money, the stewardship of time, the stewardship of love, the stewardship of all the other gifts that God has given us, I would like to have us think of how we can see these multiplied.

Take, for instance, this interesting statement in *Volume 2*, page 135:

"Love cannot live without action, and every act increases it..." *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, page 135.

"...every act increases it..." *Ibid.*

My dear brother who offered prayer has tremendous muscles, a set of them in his arms. He's gotten them by doing pushups. And every act has increased that. Is that right?

Now, the beautiful thing is friends that it works with love as well as with physical muscle. And that's what I want you to think of tonight. And God intends that we shall have an experience in practical things, in material things, that teaches us these spiritual things.

The idea that there is something holy about poverty, or that there is something necessary to the Christian's life in keeping poor—this is not the Scripture. It's true that our Lord walked this earth a poor man. It's true that He took our poverty that we might be rich. But we have many examples in the Bible of how God used people to amass wealth and to use it.

Abraham is one, Isaac and Jacob, Solomon. Nicodemus and his wealth were used in the early church. And the apostle Paul was a rich man when he accepted the Gospel. He used his wealth, and he was a good manager. If Paul was ever in debt, I'm not aware of it. He was an example of what we're studying tonight, an

example of the stewardship of money, of property, of wealth, and the stewardship of love.

In the parable, how was it that these men got more, and they started with a pound each? They got it by using it, by investing it. Our talents, our love, our money will not increase while those gifts lay idle. It's in using them.

Now, we'll take an illustration that the Bible uses over and over again. And that is the matter of sowing and reaping. Let's turn to Isaiah the 55th chapter and the 10th verse, and I want you to see what the purpose of sowing and reaping is. Of course, you know, without reading it, everybody knows what farming is for. But I want to read it out of the Bible.

Isaiah 55 verse 10 tells me what two things are the purpose of farming, according to this text. Let me help you. It's the last two lines.

“...Seed to the sower, and bread to the eater” Isaiah 55:10.

Where do we get seed for next year's harvest? Well, we get it from this year's harvest, don't we? Where do we get bread? We get it from that same harvest. And good management—and don't miss it—is in knowing how much to eat and how much to save for further sowing. That's good management.

And in God's plan, He intends that you and I shall learn to share the harvest both in sharing bread with those who need bread to eat and sharing seed for sowing to those who need seed for sowing.

God does not intend that either the eating of the grain or the saving of the grain shall minister to selfishness on our part. Neither does He intend that a mismanaged sense of generosity should lead us to give away all the harvest so that we have none left to eat and none left to sow for next year's harvest.

Now, let's meditate on these great facts for a little while.

Suppose that I take the harvest of grain this year, and I decide, “Well, I'm going to eat all of this. I'm going to eat all of this.”

And I don't share any with my needy friends, or neighbors, or families around me. Neither do I save any for next year's harvest. That would be very foolish. It would be shortsighted selfishness, wouldn't it? But there are people like that.

On the other hand, suppose that I'm a miser, that I tend to hoard, that it just hurts me every time anybody eats any of the grain. It almost hurts me to eat any myself. I just want to hoard it, store it up in bins and granaries. That's another face or another facet of selfishness, isn't it? Quite different from the first, but it's quite foolish, also.

No, good management, good sense is in eating some of the grain, in saving some of the grain. And the purpose of saving some of the grain is what? To sow it so it will do what? Make some more grain.

“Well,” somebody says, “then why not save it all and sow it all, and then save all that and sow all of that?”

We could soon have the whole world covered with grain fields, couldn't we? In the meanwhile, the people that did it would have starved to death, you understand. No, the great purpose—don't miss it—the great purpose of saving is not to accumulate more and more and more. The great purpose of saving is that we may perpetuate the cycle and make it possible to share more and more, both of the bread and of the seed for sowing.

I like the way the apostle puts it in 2 Corinthians the ninth chapter, the sixth verse. Will you turn to that, please?

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” 2 Corinthians 9:6.

The more I sow, the more I'll reap. The less I sow, the less I'll reap.

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work”
2 Corinthians 9:7–8.

You notice the “alls” in there? Always, all-sufficiency, in all things. Isn't that wonderful? How does it come? It comes—don't miss it—by a proper balance in this thing of eating, or consuming, or using a certain amount of what God entrusts to us to maintain ourselves and our families, of using some of it to save for future investment and to share with others at different times in different experiences, according as needs arise and as God's Spirit impresses us. This is the lesson that Paul is teaching us here.

The 10th verse is beautiful, and I want to read it as given in the American Standard translation:

“ And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing...”
2 Corinthians 9:10 (*American Standard Version*).

What does God supply seed for, does this say? For seed for the sower and for bread for food. And He will both:

“...supply and multiply your seed for sowing...” 2 Corinthians 9:10
(*American Standard Version*).

Suppose that I take that promise and twist it to mean that if I'll give away all my seed that God will miraculously next time I need to plant, that He'll supply it. Then, I've missed the point. God wants me to see in every harvest, as I gather it, His provision for three things: my own needs, helping with the needs of others, and saving some for future needs and for future investments.

This great law runs through various phases of life. It involves the stewardship of money. This is so foreign to what many people are doing today that it needs to be emphasized. It's as strange to multitudes of people as the true Sabbath is strange in this day when the commandments of men are exalted.

A number of years ago, I heard a friend of mine observe that the old proverb says, "A fool and his money are soon parted." But he said, "Today, people part with theirs before they even get it." You can chew on that awhile.

Have we seriously faced the possibility, the desirability that God wants even poor people to learn to save? Well, if I may make this suggestion, friends, if there's anybody that needs to learn to save, it's the poor man. If there's anybody can afford to be wasteful—nobody should, but if there's anybody can, it's the man that has millions.

The poorer we are, the more we need to learn to save. Do you see it? But God is in the business of helping us to do this. And these lessons we're studying tonight are to help us.

"My God shall supply *all* your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:19.

But if every time I get something, whether it's seed, or food, or money, or whatever, if every time I get it, I use it all up either on myself or just simply giving it away, then I have missed this fundamental lesson that God wants me to be a steward, to use some of what He gives me in such a way as to produce what? More harvest, more harvest. That's the only way that there can be bread next year and the year after that and the year after.

If everybody who sowed a field today either ate up or gave away all his grain this year, where would there be any harvest next year? I thank the Lord, friends, that God has given some Christian businessmen a good sense. I'd call it scheming if that work didn't have a kind of a bad connotation. Scheme is perhaps not the word. Shrewdness, that's the word, just good sanctified shrewdness.

But friends, that doesn't have to be developed merely in people that run businesses. Doing business for God is the greatest business in this world. God made Joseph a shrewd manager. He developed it working for his heathen boss. But thank God, when it was fully developed, God used it to save a whole nation. And to save the family of God on earth.

There are men and women here tonight, students, workers and people from a distance, who if you catch the lesson that we're studying tonight, God can use you, my friend, to handle hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds

of thousands of dollars for God. But you'll never do it as long as everything that comes in goes out, either the next day or the next week, never, never do it. There must come into your life the settled purpose that you're going to learn God's law of sowing and reaping and what to do with the harvest.

"Ah," but somebody says, "but Brother Frazee, shouldn't we be generous?"

Indeed. But part of generosity is sanctified common sense in saving some of the harvest to plant. Do you see? That's *intelligent* generosity. That's what God wants us all to do, with money, with strength, with every gift that He has given us.

Now, He's given us some guidelines in the stewardship of money. Fundamental to it is the tithe. What does "tithe" mean? Tenth. Who does it belong to? It belongs to God. Of course, it *all* belongs to Him, but recognizing that it all belongs to Him, we look to Him for direction as to how to use it.

Which tenth is the tithe? The first. That's right. And so, the ancient Israelites, when they reaped their fields, and they had all their bushels of grain there, they took every tenth bushel and did what with it? Turned it in to the sanctuary for the support of the work of God.

Most of us are not measuring our income with bushels. But however it's measured, one-tenth is what? The tithe. That's holy.

Now, beyond that, ancient Israel gave offerings. They had a second tithe which was used to help the poor and also in various facets of religious worship. And they had other offerings besides that. So, in ancient Israel, they gave anywhere from a fourth to a third of their income.

But my point is this. God never taught them to give it all. It was all God's, but God taught them that while they were to regard the tithe as a holy, sanctified portion for a certain use, and give offerings, that they were just as much under obligation to God to use some of that to take care of their families and to help the poor and needy.

In other words, the three great purposes of harvest are to use and to share and to save, to use and to share and to save. God wants us to learn it today. Shall we try it? Now, you can learn this just as well with pennies and dimes and nickels and quarters as you can with hundreds and thousands and millions of dollars, friends.

There's somebody here tonight, some boy or girl perhaps, maybe not even a teenager yet, that's going to get the idea that God can help you to start saving money. And I hadn't thought of relating my own experience, and we're supposed to apologize, you know, whenever we say any things that happen to us. But occasionally, it's a good thing to do.

I can remember, friends, when I was a boy. And it was my privilege to help earn the family income from the time I was eight years old. We were poor, we were very, very poor due to my father accepting this message and keeping the Sabbath and losing a good job.

But I remember, while we were helping to earn the family income, we were given an allowance, my brother and I. You'd smile if I told you what it was. It was a nickel a month. Of course, a nickel bought more in those days than it does now.

And once in a while, I had a birthday, and somebody might remember me, some relative with a few more nickels or quarters, or even a dollar. At any rate, I had a job, and some of that money I saved.

And you know, the time came when my heart's desire was fulfilled. I was longing for a little printing press where I could print cards. And I'd look at the advertisements, and they could be bought for cheaper than you can buy things today by money standards. And I kept saving my money. And one day, would you know it, I ran across an advertisement for a secondhand press, and I bought a little hand press and some fonts of type for five dollars. And I had enough in my jar to get it.

I've heard my mother tell later she never saw a happier boy than her boy was as he came for the delivery truck that he'd rented for fifty cents with that hand press and the fonts of type and the equipment that went with it.

And so, I began to print cards. And of course, what did that do? Well, it generated a little more income. Later, I could buy another press a little bigger. Later, my brother and I bought a regular press which helped us as we went through school at Loma Linda.

Brothers and sisters, as I say, if I need to apologize, I apologize, but I'm so glad God taught me when I was a little fellow and a teenager that money can be saved no matter how poor you are, money can be saved. It isn't the amount that you save. It's the principle of learning to set aside a little. Not the first portion. That's the tithe, that's the tithe. But somewhere before you spend every nickel you have, make it a settled practice to set aside something to be used only in emergencies.

One of the great purposes of God in having us save like this is so that when an emergency comes in His work, we can pour it in. All right.

I'd like to have you think a little now of the stewardship of love. I referred to it earlier, and I read you this wonderful statement here in *Volume 2*, page 136:

"Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, page 136.

Isn't that beautiful? Every time you love somebody in God's way, in God's time, at God's orders, your love is increased. But love is like money, it can be wasted. Love is like money, it can be used unwisely. Love is like money, it needs stewardship. Love is power, and power needs to be under control, doesn't it? Yes.

I've asked young people sometimes, "Which would you rather have, a car with a motor and no brakes, or one with brakes and no motor?"

And I haven't gotten anybody yet to say they wanted either one. And I agree. Love is like that friends, love is like that. It needs to be strong in its motive power, but there needs to be a control, a restraint that keeps us from the damaging, destroying effects of love that are bestowed to the wrong person, or at the wrong time, or in the wrong way.

Two of the Ten Commandments are devoted to the stewardship of love—the Fifth Commandment, dealing with our relation to parents, the Seventh Commandment, dealing with the relation of husbands and wives. These are dealing with the stewardship of love.

And may I call attention to this. The first lesson that a child learns is not love between him and some other person outside the family. The first lesson that a child learns normally, typically, is that somebody loves him, his father or mother, or both. And by and by the child learns—as he receives that love, he learns to do what? To love back, he learns to love back.

Have you ever wondered why it takes so long to grow up? My, I used to wish I could grow up faster. But since I've been old enough to vote, I find that I still have to grow up some more. But my point is this, friends—and don't miss it—God intends that children and youth shall learn first the love between parent and child, and between child and parent before they ever think of the love between husband and wife as applying to themselves. In other words, these love affairs between those who are not old enough is not a proper stewardship of love.

Let me read an interesting statement from *Messages to Young People*, page 452:

“The young affections should be restrained until the period arrives when sufficient age and experience will make it honorable and safe to unfetter them”
Messages to Young People, page 452.

So, my dear children and young people, until the age arrives where the Master says it's honorable and safe to unfetter your affections, what are you to do with them? Have them under restraint. It's a wonderful thing when a young man has this attitude as he's growing up and becomes of an age when he can understand these things:

“My love is to be kept for that certain young woman that God may give me when His time arrives.”

It's a wonderful thing when a girl has this attitude:

“Love is too sacred, too precious, too pure, too valuable to be just thrown to this one or that one.”

That's the way to dissipate it, dear girls. It's a wonderful thing when a girl has this attitude:

“My love (of that kind of love) is to be reserved, it’s to be saved, it’s to be kept until God’s time comes for the man that is to be my husband.”

Somebody may say, “But Brother Frazee, how is this giving any exercise to love?”

Remember what I said just a moment ago. The Fifth Commandment comes before the Seventh. It’s in the parental home that children and young people learn the true science and art of love and the experience of love. And it’s only as children learn to be truly loving and to show their love in practical ways to father and mother that they are ready to even think of taking on the responsibilities of establishing a home of their own.

This is summarized so beautifully in the last page of *Messages to Young People*, taken from that beautiful story of Isaac and Rebecca, page 466:

“It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own. Let them here practice self-denial, and manifest kindness, courtesy, and Christian sympathy. Thus love will be kept warm in the heart, and he who goes out from such a household to stand at the head of a family of his own will know how to promote the happiness of her whom he has chosen as a companion for life” *Ibid.*, page 466.

A boy that has not learned to love his parents, even when they’re hard to get along with, will not succeed in loving his wife when she becomes hard to get along with. It applies the same, of course, with the girl and the wife.

Oh friends, God wants us to be happy. He wants us to be happy in the stewardship of money. He wants us to be happy in the stewardship of love.

Now, just as God has told us how to spend our money, and He’s segregated it, some for tithe, some for offerings, some for saving, some for using for our need, so it is with this matter of love. There is a special love that belongs alone to the husband and the wife. This is the Seventh Commandment.

I found a beautiful statement here in *Volume 2* that I want to share with you. Written to a husband, so beautifully expressed, page 416, 417:

“True, pure love is precious. It is heavenly in its influence. It is deep and abiding... It will lead to a constant effort to make your wife happy. If you have this love, it will come natural to make this effort. It will not appear to be forced... Let your wife be the object of your special and hearty affection” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, pages 416–417.

I’m sure of this, friends. Very few of the people today have even begun to grasp the great privilege of true, special, inner-circle love that belongs to the

husband and wife. And do you know why? Because they never learned love and obedience in the parental home. They come in that order.

And if you say to me, “Well, Brother Frazee, I never learned it in the parental home, and there was no way to learn it there.”

If you’re willing and want it bad enough, God will put you in somebody else’s home where you can learn it there. But learn it you *must* if you’re to succeed. The love between parent and child, between student and teacher, between helper and leader, is fundamental to learning the lesson of love that will succeed in establishing Christian homes and the proper true unselfish love between husband and wife. You see, it’s all in balance, friends, all in balance.

Now, back to our parable of the pounds, what is the lesson that Jesus is teaching us as He tells us of these different men, each one of whom received a certain gift? That it can all multiply by being used in the right way under the Master’s directions according to His instructions, so that we have more when we get through than when we started—more strength, more money, more love.

Why friends, Jesus told those poor Galilean fishermen that followed Him, He said, “If you just stay with me, you’ll not only receive a hundredfold in this life for all you’ve left but in the world to come eternal life.”

So, let us this evening, let us this evening make up our minds that we’re going to enter into a closer and sweeter partnership with our Lord. This is what He’s after in all this is to have you and me know Him as our special friend, and as One that’s interested in all that concerns us.

Now, we’re going to spend a little time in witnessing. Are you thankful for Jesus tonight? Have you given Him your money, your time, your love, your service? Are you happy that He’s the owner of your life, and are you happy that He has made you His steward? And you want to make Him happy by letting Him know that you appreciate it. Just come forward and give your witness.

[Testimony service followed.]

[Elder Frazee’s comments during testimony service.]

Listen, I haven’t taken any census, but I venture that the percentage of people on this campus that are out of debt is far greater than the general population outside that are handling much money. And I hope that you’ll become a part of the fraction that is out of debt and then learn to save. Oh, it’s a blessed thing to be out of debt, isn’t it? And then, it’s a blessed thing to have a little put by for a rainy day.

Somebody says, “Brother Frazee, this doesn’t sound like faith.” Yes. You know what faith is? Faith is doing what God says. And if you question this matter of provision for the future, there’s a whole chapter about it in *Adventist Home*, page 395. I’m not going to read it. I’m going to let you read it: “Provision for the Future,” *Adventist Home*, page 395.

...Let's see if we can say that together. Say it once more, and then we're going to repeat it after you.

[Man from congregation] When your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall.

[Elder Frazee] All right. When your outgo exceeds your income, then your upkeep will be your downfall.

Once again: When your outgo exceeds your income, then your upkeep will be your downfall.

...Somebody says, "Well, whenever I get enough money so it's worthwhile keeping accounts, then I'll do it."

You may never get to that point on that program.

...The more we thank Him and the more we use what He's given us as He wishes, the more He'll do.

Precious Lord, Thou knowest each heart, and we in a special way bring to Thee these that have been convicted of a decision they need to make, and they're putting their hands in Thine. Give them the joy that comes from knowing they're in partnership with Thee over these matters.

Take us all as a congregation very close to Thy heart of love tonight, and as we think of what Jesus gave for us, may it be our heart's response just now to give all to Him. We ask it in His dear name, amen.

God bless you and a happy Sabbath.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org