

Hidden Roots

#0407

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 14, 1972

Last Friday night, you remember we were studying some things that might help us to meet the coming of Jesus, to be ready ourselves, and help many others to be ready. Last Friday night, I know that there were a number that gained specific victories; they told me so. More than one person told me after the meeting that they felt that that meeting was just for them personally. I trust it will be equally so tonight, dear friends, because I believe that our heavenly Father is able to give us a message and a blessing suited for many different people.

This morning, as I was working out in the potato field seeking to rid a place full of Johnson grass, I got some precious lessons that I want to share with you this evening at the beginning of our study. I suppose most of you are acquainted with this beautiful weed. If you didn't know it was a weed, you might think it was quite ornamental. The interesting thing about Johnson grass, of course, is its various methods of spreading. It spreads, as many grasses do, by seeds. When these seeds you see here get ripe, they can be blown around by the wind and really scatter that way. But the worst thing about them is not what appears on top. It's what's down underneath. You'll notice that they have quite a root system and underground stems, and these spread out through the ground.

One place today where I had gotten some big shoots like this and pulled up, I dug further in and found these. And at these joints, new plants can spring up as you see them starting here. This one really looks like the Devil's pitchfork, doesn't it? [Laughter] Yes, well, now one of these groups of grasses that I was digging at was right in a hill of potatoes, and I was interested in what the results were. This is all the potatoes there were in that hill—two little potatoes. Too much competition with the roots of the Johnson grass.

Now let's turn to Hebrews 12, and we'll read the text (or perhaps I should say our *second* text; the *first* text is from the garden). Hebrews, the 12th chapter, the 15th verse. We'll read the 14th with it:

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” Hebrews 12:14–15.

Now I know from what they told me that a number of souls got a great blessing last Friday night. But I want to tell you something, dear friends: It's possible to do quite

a thorough work of dealing with all that appears on the surface and yet leave, deep in the heart, these hidden roots which, springing up, will trouble you and others. And so this evening, I would like to deal with some of those hidden roots. And if God can help us do as thorough work tonight with the hidden roots as we did with some of the more apparent shoots last Friday night, I know angels will rejoice.

A few days ago, I was visiting with a young man. We were discussing the question of tobacco. He was explaining to me why he'd smoked. He knew, of course, what medical science has brought to light concerning the relation of tobacco smoking to lung cancer, emphysema, heart attacks, and other conditions. But he said, "I get such satisfaction out of smoking that I keep on smoking because of the effect it has on the way I feel." And then he added this: "After all, it's *my* life. If I die, I'm the one who is going to have to die. So why shouldn't I be the one who decides what to do with my life?"

Now there are millions who have this philosophy today. There may be someone here tonight who has it. In fact, it may be that some hidden roots of that philosophy lie deep in many a heart here tonight.

The interesting thing about this is that, in a sense, it's all true, but it is not *all* the truth. There is more, much more. And I think it might be well to have all the facts before us before we draw conclusions, to be sure that all the figures are in the column before we try to add them up. What do you say?

Well, let's look at a few facts and figures. First, some questions. Can you be sure that, in exercising *your* choice of what to do with *your* life, you're not interfering with someone else in *their* choice of what to do with *their* life? Or does this make any difference? There's many a man filling his home with tobacco smoke, and his wife and little baby are the unwilling victims of those many poisons that are in the smoke. He's exercising *his* choice of what to do with *his* life, but what about the baby and the mother?

There are thousands (particularly in our great cities, but it's reaching out into other places) exercising their choice of what to do with their lives and who are starting to take drugs of various kinds. But does it stop with them? Oh, no. In many cases, there seems to be almost a missionary *zeal* to involve others, and so, the terrible blight spreads.

I noticed in our county paper this week a full-page ad warning parents about the drug peril in our schools and in society today. Some people are exercising their choice of what to do with their life by engaging in violence and crime—cutting other people up. They're making their choice, but it's affecting other people. So to any man, young or old, who thinks that because *he's* the one who's going to have to die if he makes the wrong choice, that therefore he has the right to be let alone while he makes that choice, I would urge these questions: Are you *sure* that you can exercise that choice and still leave everybody else to exercise *his* choice without your interfering with them? But there's a second question I'd like to have you think of, and that's this: Do you belong to yourself? Who do you belong to? Are you an owner, or are you a steward? Will the day come when you must give an account?

Are those fair questions? Are they relevant? Oh yes, friends, they're right on the theme, right on the point. The fact is, we are not our own (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). You belong to the One who made you, not to yourself. You didn't make yourself. The Creator gave you your life, and that life is so valuable, so precious, that He laid down His *own* life to ransom you. That's how valuable you are. And what's it all for? What did He make you for? What did He have in mind? To put it very simply, in three words, friends: He made you *to please Him*, to please Him. You'll find the text for that in Revelation 4:11:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” Revelation 4:11.

This is an echo from the 43rd chapter of Isaiah:

“This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise” Isaiah 43:21.

So you're not your own. You have been *made* by the Creator with a purpose. You've been bought with a price. And what's it for? To please Him. But what pleases Him? Now we're getting right down to some basic things. Do you know what pleases Him, friends? Not some automatic response, not some computer answers, but the free choice of an intelligent mind that, having viewed the various alternatives, says, “I appreciate, Lord, your wisdom. Your plan is a good plan. Your way of life is a good way. I like the way You do things. But more than this, I appreciate Your love. At infinite cost, You have made it possible for me to *choose* to make a decision. You do not force me. You leave me free. I can trust a love like that, and I choose to choose *with* You instead of *against* You.”

This is what God longs for, friends. It's impossible to give Him any *more* than that; nothing *less* than this can satisfy Him. In other words, friends, God can never be satisfied until *I* am satisfied. God can never be satisfied until *I* am satisfied. And this little earth life is, most of all, for one great purpose—to find out what I *really* want, what will truly satisfy me. And God is going to *give* everybody what he wants, what he *really* wants.

Have you found out yet what you want, what you *really* want? This is the great purpose of life. God furnishes us with the money and lets us choose what we spend it for. The money is this earthly life—its hours and days and months and years, its energy, its physical, mental, and spiritual resources. All these we may think of as so many pieces of money. And then with that money in our hands, with this time and strength and intellect, with the energies of body and soul, within our hands, He comes [Elder Frazee knocks on the podium], a Salesman knocking at the door.

Turn to Revelation, the third chapter, and you'll see what I mean. Revelation, the 3rd chapter. I'll read the 20th verse, the first part, and then I'll read the 18th verse. These verses, you remember, are part of the Laodicean message, God's appeal to the remnant church:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock..." Revelation 3:20.

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see"
Revelation 3:18.

Yes, the Heavenly Salesman, the Divine Merchant Man, is going from door to door in Laodicea and knocking. What does He want? He wants to make a sale. What does He want us to buy? Gold, white raiment, and eye salve. And remember, He Himself has furnished us the money with which to buy, but we don't have to buy. We can take the very breath which He gives us moment by moment, the purchase of His sacrifice on Calvary, and use it to tell Him, "Go away. I don't want what You want." We can take the very life, formed in our Creator's image, and spend it for things that perish with the using.

Oh friends, what an infinite love and what wonderful patience! He's standing at the door and knocking, seeking to help us to see the beauty and the value of the merchandise He offers us—gold tried in the fire. I can choose to have faith instead of doubt and unbelief. I can choose to have love instead of selfishness. But as truly as I can choose to *have* the gold, I can choose *not* to have it. As certainly as I can choose to have Him place within my heart that love for others, I can choose to refuse it. I can choose to cherish instead the envy, the pride, the complaining, the sensitiveness, the morbid absorption with myself which makes it impossible for me to be rich in love.

Oh, friend, what will I do with that Merchant standing there at the door? What will I tell Him? Will I take the gold? Will I take the money that He has given me and spend it for these infinite riches? I tell you this, friends: That which we *spend* is *transient*; that which we *receive* is *eternal*. That which we surrender is only for this life (I mean, that's all we can control). This life we now live, if we'll give it to Jesus, He gives us eternal riches. But if we choose to mispend, waste, throw away this present life, that's all we'll ever have, except that hour of God's judgment when we stand before the Judge of all the earth and meet life's record and give an account of our stewardship.

White raiment. You'll notice in the preceding verses that the trouble with Laodicea is that it's ragged and naked and doesn't know it. Oh, how many there are that *need* to get some clothes today, spiritually and literally.

A holy life is available to me. And what does this mean? It means, friends, that if I will *spend* my choice, if I will give to God all I have, then His precious life—His holy,

precious, white, righteous life—covers my past just as if I had never sinned. I'm accepted as if I had *always* been good. More than that, He promises, with that same righteous life, to give me the victory over sin from day to day and to develop in me that character which will reflect His image fully. Isn't that wonderful, friends? And do you know what that involves? That involves reaching the place where every desire of my heart will be like His. And so it is written in the 37th Psalm. Will you turn to that, please? This is one of the most *amazing* promises in all the Bible. The 37th Psalm, and the 4th verse. Here is the way to be perfectly satisfied:

“Delight thyself also in the LORD: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart” Psalm 37:4.

In coming to God, we may have to give up something that we *think* we like. But in exchange, He will give us something which, by an experience, we will finally learn to *know* that we like. Thank God, we're not going to go all through eternity bearing the cross.

It's a wonderful thing to know that the One who died for us died not to make us miserable but to make us happy. He knows the combination. He knows how we're put together. But friends, I don't *have* to buy that white raiment. I can keep my rags. It's amazing how good they look to the unconverted heart.

Oh, I'm so thankful that the Merchant Man waits while I make up my mind. Do I really *want* to want what *He* wants? Do I really *choose* to have what pleases *Him*? That's the question. And remember, it's no forced answer that will satisfy Him. He longs to give me an experience where I shall love all that He loves and hate all that He hates.

And now in Revelation 3, what was that third article of merchandise that He has in His tray? What is it? Eyesalve. And what does He say the purpose of the eyeslave is? “That thou mayest see.” Oh, I think I see all right. That's the trouble. Laodicea *thinks* it sees.

“...And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” Revelation 3:17.

I think sometimes, friends, we wouldn't be so satisfied with what we wear, literally and spiritually, if our eyes were open, what do you say? “...And knowest not...” But thank God, the eyesalve is available “that thou mayest see.”

“Do you mean things would look *different* when I get the eyesalve applied?”

Oh, yes. Things will look different. But notice: *I* must buy. The choice is *mine*. He stands at the door, the heavenly Merchant Man. He displays His wares in the most attractive way. But there is no pressure in that tender plea, no arm twisting. He waits while I make up my mind. He'll wait a day, a week, a lifetime. Oh, what love!

You remember that experience recorded by Mark in the 10th chapter of his Gospel. The rich young ruler who came running to Jesus and, kneeling at His feet, he asked what he might do to have eternal life. Jesus recited some of the Commandments. The ruler said, "I've kept all those. What do I lack yet?"

Mark says, "Jesus, beholding him, loved him..." He said, "You lack just one thing. If you would be perfect, go home and sell everything you have, give it to the poor, and you'll have treasure in Heaven, and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." (See Mark 10:17–21.)

What did the young man do? He stood there. May I emphasize that Jesus didn't twist his arm. He had made the only appeal that divine love could make. He had pointed to the place where surgery was vital. And as He saw the clouded brow that indicated the unwilling heart's response, Jesus didn't begin to compromise and cut down on the price. He didn't say, "Well, if you can't pay *all* you have for this gold I offer, how about getting together on some other arrangement?" There is no compromise in God's government. God lets you have what you want. But oh, my friends, if you *do*, like the rich young ruler, eventually you'll go away sorrowful. Christ's curbs are so drastic; Christ's price is so high.

Someone says, "Isn't salvation a free gift?"

It's a free gift to those who give all, my friends. You can't purchase it in the same sense that we buy with money in town. But you can make the *exchange* of your way for *His way*—*your* life that He may give you *His* life. You can make that choice and, without it, nothing can be done.

I repeat, friends, that He lets us do what we want to do. Look, please, at the 14th chapter of Ezekiel. Here's an interesting experience. The prophet here finds a number of visitors. They're elders of Israel, leaders in the church of Christ. They come and sit before him. They want to ask the prophet some questions. They want to know what to do about certain things. But the prophet has a radio connection with Heaven, and God says they're very religious and have come to ask some questions. But they have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. In other words, they've already made up their minds what they want to do. And now they're daring to come here and ask the prophet of God what they shall do. God says, "Should I be enquired of at all by them?" Then in the fourth verse, God tells us that when people come to the prophet and, with idols in their heart, ask certain questions, "...I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols."

And so I believe (listen carefully to what I say) I believe that every day people are getting answers to their prayers that confirm them in doing what they want to do. I believe that's happening every day. What do they need? They need the eyesalve. They need some gold instead of some idol.

The sixth verse:

“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations” Ezekiel 14:6.

What did I read last Friday night? If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, but *somebody will* hear me—the Devil. And the same Lord who, from His throne, permitted a spirit of Satan to go to all the prophets that stood before Ahab and Jehoshaphat and urged them forward in a war contrary to the will of God, that same God is ready today to allow you and me to see what we want to see and do what we want to do.

So it is written in 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12 of those in this last generation that turn away from God’s express will:

“...Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12.

Notice that they find their pleasure in that which brings sorrow to God. Oh friends, it’s a wonderful thing to love someone so much that all you want is to know what *they* want.

Jesus says:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” John 14:15.

One evening, a mother heard her little girl praying. She heard her say in her prayer, “Dear Lord, please make Albany the capital of New Jersey.”

The mother said, “Why Darling, why do you pray *that*?”

Her answer was very simple. She said, “Because that’s what I wrote in my examination today.”

The little girl has some older sisters and brothers and cousins. There may be some here tonight. Did you ever pray that God would rearrange things, so what you think and wish and desire would turn out right after all? Have you ever written down some answers, either in a letter or on paper or just in your mind, and then prayed, “Oh Lord, please make it that way because that’s what I’ve said, and I’d hate to lose face”? Oh, my friends, this is part of paying the price to get the eyesalve and the white raiment and the gold. If it strips us of all our reputation, if it humbles us in the dust, let’s tell God that we’re not asking Him to make Albany the capital of New Jersey at all, that we’re

asking Him to help us learn where things belong. We're not asking Him to change the location of anything to keep up with *our* ideas, that we're asking Him to teach us *His* ways, irrespective of *our* ways. What do you say?

Oh, this applies to a thousand things in life—in diet, in dress, in music, in reading, in association, friendship, courtship, marriage, training of children, Sabbath-keeping, education... Yes, friends, a thousand. But how many, like the elders of Israel, are coming to the prophet with the idols in their hearts and asking God for a revelation or an impression or guidance or something that will confirm them in what they've already chosen?

"Lord, please make Albany the capital of New Jersey." Did you ever pray that? Do you remember Balaam, poor Balaam?

Turn, please, to 2 Peter, the 2nd chapter, and the 15th verse, and I want you to see something about this poor man. Peter is talking about some people many, many years later who were going in the way of Balaam.

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray,
following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the
wages of unrighteousness" 2 Peter 2:15.

What was Balaam's problem? He loved the rewards of doing his own way. And he saw (he *thought* he saw) that if he could just get God's cooperation, some wonderful things could happen (for Balaam). He wanted the riches that the king of Moab offered. He wanted the recognition that would come with the successful prophesying trip over there with Balak. He "...loved the wages of unrighteousness."

Oh friends, is anyone here tempted to pray like Balaam prayed? Or *did* Balaam pray? Did he? Oh, yes. He prayed again and again. He even told the Lord, he said, "If this is going to displease You, I won't do it." But, oh my, his fingers were crossed when he said that, weren't they? Yes! What was the matter with Balaam? Ah friends, here's what the matter. [Elder Frazee apparently holds up a clump of Johnson grass.] Do you see, friends? The shoots were cut off again and again on top, but down underneath, the roots were undisturbed. He loved the wages of unrighteousness. Balaam never got to the point where he *hated* the selfishness and covetousness of his soul. Repentance never got deep enough.

Of course, friends, I suppose if there were someone here who had robbed a bank and murdered someone, I suppose we would all feel constrained to pray most earnestly that they would repent with all their souls and with bitter tears confess their crime. But the sins that you and I are guilty of, they're not so bad, are they? So we will "whitewash" them.

"...Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and
thereby many be defiled" Hebrews 12:15.

Do you know the hardest sin to get rid of? The one you like. The one you like. The one you like the *most*. The one you would fain hold on to, the sin for which you hope someone will give you some loophole—that bit of worldliness, that bit of pride, that bit of self-esteem, that bit of selfishness, that bit of covetousness, that bit of lust, that bit of malice, that bit of folly—that isn't near as bad as murder or theft, that root which is hidden down in the heart. There are people who, every day and every week, are going through the motions of cutting off the shoots on top and never getting down to the knee work of digging down in the depths of the soul, the depths of the soil, and rooting out those hidden shoots which, all the while, are spreading and forming a network.

Let me make it very simple, my friends. Seek not merely for an outward life in conformity to what God and your fellow men expect. Seek for two things farther than that. Seek for this: to have your *mind* changed so that you see what God sees, as He sees it. Then deeper than that, seek for an experience where you have your *heart* changed so that you *love* what God loves and *hate* what God hates. Then you'll be safe anywhere in the universe all through eternity.

Can that be? Oh, yes! This is why Jesus died. And remember, if you and I will do business with Him, He's offering to make that transfer. He's offering us the gold of faith and love, the white raiment of perfect righteousness, the eyesalve that will enable us to see.

Will we tonight, then, settle it in our hearts that we're going to dig deep down into the soil of the heart? That we're going to ask God to help us *think* as He thinks, to view things as He views them, to take the attitude toward sin that He takes? Then sin will hurt *us* if it hurts *Him*. Shall we seek Him for that love for His will?

Oh friends, let me put it this way: never rest satisfied with merely *doing* outwardly what God requires. Seek a love for it. Day by day, seek God on your knees and through the study of His Word until love for God's will is strong in your heart. As you look at Calvary and see what sin has cost, you will hate it. As you look at Calvary and see what love has given, your heart will respond in loving service.

I thank God tonight, friends, that the Merchant Man is with us this evening. What do you say? Is there anybody here tonight who hears the knock of Jesus and you sense that you need some gold, perhaps some white raiment, perhaps some eyesalve? Do you want to open the door and do business with Him? If you'd like to kneel down just where you are and tell Him that, the transaction can take place tonight in this little chapel.

[The audience kneels for prayer.]

Our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the message from Thy Book tonight. We thank Thee that Jesus has knocked at our heart's door, and we've opened the door. We thank Thee for the great privilege we have tonight for receiving the gold, the white raiment, and the eye salve. We don't want to spend another day fooling ourselves or

anyone else. We want to play fair with Thee. We want to get down beneath the shoots and deal with the roots—the roots of understanding, the roots of desire.

We don't want to spend all our lives doing things we don't like to do, and holding ourselves from doing things that we really would like to do. We want to be changed. We want to see the wisdom of Thy ways. We want to experience a deep love for Thy holy law. We earnestly desire that Thou will bring us to the place where when obeying Thee, we shall be but following out our own impulses. Lord, however long the path, and however much time we may need to spend on our knees digging out the roots, we pray that Thou will keep us working with Thee until all Thou hast promised is fulfilled.

We thank Thee that tonight we're accepted, meanwhile, just as if we had never sinned. We're so thankful that as we surrender all to Thee, the precious life of Jesus covers us, and His robe of righteousness enfolds us, and we are Thine, Blessed Lord, wholly Thine, only Thine. This is our choice. We thank Thee for hearing us, in Jesus' name, amen.

Let us stand.

[Congregation joins Elder Frazee in singing the first stanza of "Whiter than Snow."]

May the Lord bless you, each one, with His wonderful love. Amen.

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