

Something Better

#0534

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 5, 1976

The text this evening is Deuteronomy 12:7. I select the second line of the verse to give point to the subject:

“...And ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto,
ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath
blessed thee” Deuteronomy 12:7.

God’s program is one of joy and rejoicing. Everything He says is to make His children happy. Every restriction is to keep us out of trouble. Everything He enjoins is to show us the way to peace.

“...Ye shall rejoice in *all* that ye put your hand unto, ye
and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath
blessed thee” Deuteronomy 12:7.

How many commandments did the Master write on the stone? Ten. Will you repeat the Ninth Commandment with me:

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor”
Exodus 20:16.

We usually think of that as relating to people here on earth, and I’m sure that it does. But my dear friends, if it’s wrong to bear false witness against men, what shall we say about the sin of bearing false witness against God? And I discovered a snare of the enemy along this line. It is uncovered, this snare is, in *Steps to Christ*, page 116:

“If we do represent Christ, we shall make His service
appear attractive, as it really is. Christians who gather up
gloom and sadness to their souls, and murmur and
complain, are giving to others a false representation of
God and the Christian life. They give the impression that
God is not pleased to have His children happy, and in
this they bear false witness against our heavenly Father”
Steps to Christ, page 116.

So, here’s a way to break the Ninth Commandment. Just to be mournful and gloomy, to complain and murmur. It bears false witness against whom?

“...Against our heavenly Father” *Ibid.*

Thank God, friends, we're not orphans and we're not in a concentration camp. We're children of the heavenly King, and it's our privilege to sing as we pursue our homeward journey. What do you say?

Now, with this, I want to give you three statements from three of the great inspired books of the Spirit of Prophecy, each one with the expression "something better." I think many of you are familiar with at least one of these statements. Some of you may know two of them. There may be a few here that know all three of them. But I predict that nearly all will have at least one pearl to add to your string of pearls when I give you these three, and some of you may find them all new. Some of you may be hearing them for the first time.

But whether for the first time or the hundredth time, I know your heart will thrill with the sound of these beautiful expressions dealing with the joy, the happiness, the intrinsic worth, the inherent betterment (if I may use such a word), of God's principles and God's program.

The first is in the book *Education*, pages 296–297:

"‘something better’ is the watchword of education, the law of all true living. Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better. Often the youth cherish objects, pursuits, and pleasures that may not appear to be evil, but that fall short of the highest good. They divert the life from its noblest aim. Arbitrary measures or direct denunciation may not avail in leading these youth to relinquish that which they hold dear. Let them be directed to something better than display, ambition, or self-indulgence. Bring them in contact with truer beauty, with loftier principles, and with nobler lives. Lead them to behold the One ‘all together lovely’"
Education, page 296–297.

Who's that? Jesus.

"When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, the life finds its center" *Ibid.*, page 297.

Oh, I think this is beautiful, friends.

"Duty becomes a delight and sacrifice a pleasure" *Ibid.*

Now, what were those two words linked together, that we listened to three times in these few sentences? What were they? "Something better."

"‘something better’ is the watchword of education...
Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better" *Ibid.*, page 296.

And we are to direct others to:

“...something better than display, ambition, or self-indulgence” *Ibid.*, page 297.

That’s the one from *Education*. Now, the one in *Christ Object Lessons*, page 299:

“God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of praise” *Christ Object Lessons*, page 299.

What is praise? Worship. What kind of worship? Joyful worship. What’s another word for it? Thanksgiving. All right.

“God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of praise. Thus His way was to be made ‘known upon earth,’ His ‘saving health among all nations’” *Ibid.*

This is the medical missionary witness, friends, the witness of a smiling face, a song of joy, words of thanksgiving. That was His program for Israel, and it immediately adds:

“So it should be now. The people of the world are worshiping false gods. They are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding...” *Ibid.*

What do you think the next two words are? You guessed it right. That’s right.

“...something better” *Ibid.*

“The people of the world are... to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by...” *Ibid.*

What?

“...by beholding something better. God’s goodness is to be made known. ‘Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God’” *Ibid.*

Folks, this is effective missionary work, isn’t it? This is the greatest way of winning souls:

“...Not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding...” *Ibid.*

What?

“...something better” *Ibid.*

Thank the Lord for this. Now, the third one is *Ministry of Healing*, 157. This really starts over on 156.

So glad to see every one of you. We're glad you're here.

"It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits" *Ministry of Healing*, page 156.

When Jesus was talking to that woman at the well, we're told that:

"...Instead of disparaging Jacob's well, Christ presented..." *Ministry of Healing*, page 156.

What? There are those two words again.

"...something better than she possessed, even living water, the joy and hope of the gospel" *Ibid.*, pages 156–157.

Did she get interested? Oh, yes. Almost anyone can be interested in something better.

"This is an illustration of the way in which we are to work. We must offer men something better than that which they possess, even the peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding" *Ibid.*, page 157.

Oh, I'm so glad for the privilege we have. What do you say, friends? Well, are some of you finding that there *is* something better when you get close to Jesus? Are you finding there's something still better to get closer to Him? And if you still get closer, does it still get better? Would you advise anybody to get as close as they could? Would you? Ah, I think that's true witness.

And the Ninth Commandment says—let's repeat it again:

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"
Exodus 20:16.

And when as Christians we have a gloomy countenance, and we murmur and complain, we bear false witness against whom? Against God. And it's against our neighbor, too. It's certainly against his best interest, isn't it?

When we have, supposedly, the message of God, the truth of God, and yet by our attitude we indicate that we're disappointed, that we've been shortchanged, that we've been cheated a bit, that we're abused, there are some things we can't do that, oh, we'd like to do. But we dare not, for we don't want to go to hell. And so, we're enduring it, we're trying to sit it out, hoping that we can escape the fires and take the trip to heaven, and there we'll be happy. But things are pretty hard now, and we need all the grit we can get to hold on. That's what? That's a false witness.

And incidentally, friends, it's not likely to make very many converts, is it? Why, no, no. Who would want to get into a situation where he would be disappointed, shortchanged, cheated, abused? Why, no. I'd want to keep out of that. Wouldn't you?

It's very interesting, friends, how the enemy works, how audacious he is, how bold. He even came into Eden, where everything was beautiful. You remember back there in Genesis the second chapter and the third chapter? Adam and Eve had a lovely country home. They weren't bothered with a lot of things that are bothering people today. They weren't like those poor people up in New York City. They're so short on water, I was reading here, that a waiter can't serve a glass of water in a restaurant unless the people actually ask for it. They're so short on water that they can't wash their automobiles. The rich people can't fill their swimming pools—short on water, New York City, over in New Jersey, the same way.

Well, the Garden of Eden wasn't like that. They had plenty of water. Everybody had all they wanted, didn't they? What about eating? Did they have plenty to eat? Oh yes, everything lovely and beautiful. We could go on and describe it. You're acquainted with the wonderful picture.

But God, for wise purposes to teach the lesson of obedience, to give them an opportunity to show their love and their faithfulness, said about one tree, "Don't eat of this." You remember. Tree of what? Knowledge of good and evil.

And into that tree came the serpent. And who was speaking through the serpent? Satan, the Devil, he was speaking. And what did he try to get Adam and Eve to believe? He tried to get them to believe that they were abused, that things were really hard, that God was hard on them, that they were being deprived of something, they were missing something.

By the way, were they missing something? Oh yes, they were missing a great deal. They didn't know anything about smallpox or typhoid fever. They didn't know anything about jails or hospitals. They didn't know a thing about pain or tears. There are all sorts of things that they were unacquainted with. They really were missing a lot of things, weren't they?

And so, the serpent said, "If you will just listen to me and eat of this tree, you will be as gods knowing good and evil" [a paraphrase of Genesis 3:5].

My, if somebody offered *you* a mixture like that, what would you do? A mixture of good and evil, what would you do? Anyone, what would you do? You would refuse it. Would you? Are you sure? I hope so.

But ah, friends, if you do refuse the mixture of the enemy, if you refuse the mixtures of this world, you'll be missing something, and you'll be taunted with it. And people will tell you that you're being deprived of some great opportunities. And that's so, friends, whether the subject is diet, or education, or amusements, or any other subject.

Jesus is offering people what? Something better. But my dear friends, you can't eat something better and still eat all the other things, too. You can't enjoy something better in music and still get all the other music, too. You can't have something better in education and still get all the education that this world offers.

You see, Adam and Eve really thought that they were going to be able to keep all they had and get this other extra, didn't they? But in taking hold of what Satan offered, they lost what? What God had already given them.

I thought many times of that little dog that was trotting along home with a bone in his mouth that he'd picked up somewhere, looking forward eagerly to getting home and sitting there and gnawing at that bone as a puppy does, you know. But as he trotted along home, he chanced to run across a little stream, and as he ran over the little bridge, he noticed something moving there in the water. And he stopped and looked, and there was another dog with a bone in his mouth. A reflection, of course, you understand.

And looking in that mirror, he saw that other dog with the other bone. You know what he did? He grabbed for it. And of course, in doing it, he lost what? The one he had.

That's what Adam and Eve did, friends. That's right. That's what Adam and Eve did. They lost what they had in grabbing for something else. Thank God, Jesus didn't leave them to eternal loss, friends. He came down, and he instituted the plan of salvation that very day, didn't He?

And oh, what a costly plan it was. Jesus must come and die to redeem Adam's failure. Seems strange to us that the Son of God would have to die just because Adam and Eve ate a piece of fruit that they were told not to eat. But the fundamental thing was this, friends. They had doubted the wisdom of God and doubted the love of God. And until those two things were put back into their souls, they could never be happy with God. They must come to the place where they trusted God's wisdom without any question, and where they *knew* that God loved them and they loved God in return, enough to obey Him and do what He says.

That's what God's trying to get done for us, friends. He's trying to bring us to the place where we believe what He says and love what He commands. And in doing it, He's all the time offering us what? Something better. Something better in diet, something better in dress, something better in reading, something better in music, something better in education, something better in worship, something better in the home, something better in where to live, something better in everything in life.

Oh, I thank God for His beautiful way of life. What do you say? Do you? Do you say, "Amen"? Thank God. I believe you mean it, friend. Oh, let us bear witness to the goodness of our Lord. What do you say? Let's bear witness to the fact that He has given us something better. That every time we've come to a fork in the road, and we took the turn that He said to take, we found more happiness, more satisfaction, a greater blessing. Will it be that way all the way through? That's the way it will be.

Now, sometimes we get into difficulty because we look at other human beings. You know, dear friends, human beings are just human beings. That's all they are. And they make mistakes sometimes.

I was thinking about it. Suppose we had a big blackboard up here, and suppose somebody that writes really well, you know, just right—suppose somebody should write a sentence across that blackboard. And then suppose somebody like me that doesn't write so well would try to copy that. Do you think it would look just like the perfect pattern? No, it wouldn't.

And then, suppose somebody else should come along that didn't write very well and write their line under mine and look at my line instead of the perfect line. How would that look? Well, that wouldn't look too well, either.

And suppose after we had a number of those lines, suppose *you* should come up and write the line. If you really want to do your best, what line had you better look at? The perfect line, the top one.

And remember, friends, whoever you look at in this world is merely somebody that's trying to learn to write. That's all. Somebody that's trying to learn to write, they're taking penmanship. And don't be surprised if they don't get all the turns and the lines just correct. They probably won't. But not a single one of those irregularities was given to you to copy, either to justify your mistakes or to complain about. Not at all.

I read something interesting here. This is again in *Steps to Christ*, and by the way, aren't we thankful for this wonderful little book? Page 32:

“The impenitent sometimes excuse themselves by saying of professed Christians, ‘I am as good as they are. They are no more self-denying, sober, or circumspect in their conduct than I am. They love pleasure and self-indulgence as well as I do.’ Thus they make the faults of others an excuse for their own neglect of duty” *Steps to Christ*, page 32.

Were you ever tempted to do that? Were you ever tempted to look at somebody and say, “Well, if that's health reform, I don't think I want any of it”?

Were you ever tempted to look at the way somebody dressed and say, “Well, if that's dress reform, just count me out”?

Were you ever tempted to look at the way somebody kept the Sabbath and say, “Well, I don't think I could ever get any pleasure out of that”?

And so on, through the list. But now, listen.

“...The sins and defects of others do not excuse anyone, for the Lord has not given us an erring human pattern”
Ibid.

Aren't you glad?

God didn't say, "Look at the way all those people are trying to copy, and you just look at the way they do it and try to do it at least as well as they do."

No. Who's the copy? Jesus is the copy. He's the pattern.

And so, tonight, friends, something better means to look at the example of Jesus. Something better doesn't mean the way somebody else eats, or the way somebody else dresses, or the way somebody else keeps the Sabbath. Something better doesn't mean the way somebody else thinks, what their opinion is on a given subject. That might not be something better.

Something better is the beautiful life of Jesus, as revealed in the Bible. He's the One altogether lovely, and if you and I will go to Him every morning, friends, He will give us something better than the day before.

We'll read that in the book of Lamentations. It may be a strange book to find this in, but here it is in the book of Lamentations. Jeremiah wasn't weeping because he was abused. He was weeping because God's people were going into captivity because they had forsaken God's way.

But in the midst of that lamentation, he got hope. Lamentations the 3rd chapter verses 21–23:

"This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness" Lamentations 3:21–23.

I want you to read with me verses 22–23. I just read them. Now, will you read them with me:

"It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness" Lamentations 3:22–23.

Do you mean that God has something new, something fresh in the way of mercy and compassion for us every day? That's right, something better than the day before. Oh, I'm so glad about that. Aren't you, friends? So, why should I worry my soul over what other people do and use that either as an excuse for me to fail or as something for me to complain about? Why should I listen to the enemy's suggestion that I'm abused, or restricted, or restrained because I can't do this or that or the other thing?

You know, I remember an experience I had a number of years ago. I was in a certain part of the world where people ate a great many of these seafoods. I chanced one morning to be walking along a canal bank, and there was an old dead

cow, and a man was standing there picking crawfish off the old dead cow and putting them in a can he had.

Have you any idea what he was going to do with those? Take them home to eat. But I couldn't have any. My religion wouldn't let me. You can imagine how abused I felt, can't you? To think what I was missing, friends.

Are there any other things that the Lord has warned us about? Oh yes, thousands of them. What are they for? Well, some of them, friends, are to keep us from the bad things. Some of the others are to keep us just from the trivial things, the mediocre things.

“‘something better’ is the watchword of education, the law of all true living. Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better” *Education*, page 296.

And the people of this world are:

“...to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better” *Christ Object Lessons*, page 299.

Oh, let us rejoice in our privilege to bear witness to the love of God, the mercy of God, the beauty of His way, and the joy of His pattern of life. What do you say? Thank God. That's right. Amen.

Now, I want to hear from individuals. And may I suggest, dear friends, let each testimony tonight be short and let it be right on the point. You don't have to go into a lot of details. But there's one thing I'm going to request. Don't tell us how bad you are. You don't know how bad you are anyway, and there's no need of sharing what you do know with us. No, tell that to the Lord.

What I'd like to have you tell us is how good God is to you. If you've found by experience that His way is wonderful, that it brings joy to your soul, and that the closer you get to Him the better it is, if you really mean that, if you know it's so, tell it in a few words, in your own words, as the Spirit gives you utterance because there are those who listen, on earth and in heaven. Angels are listening to hear that report.

“There are angels hovering round,
There are angels hovering round,
There are angels, angels hovering round.

They will carry tidings home,
They will carry tidings home,
They will carry, carry tidings home.

To the New Jerusalem,
To the New Jerusalem,
To the New, the New Jerusalem.”

[Author unknown.]

Who has something for an angel to carry home?

[Testimony meeting]

[Comments made by Elder Frazee during testimony meeting.]

What have you got there in your hand? *Messages to Young People*. Well now, don't read that book because it'll tell you a long list of things you can't do. Who said that? What I just echoed. Who said that? Satan did. Why did I repeat it? To expose him, to expose the Devil for what he is. He's a liar. Is that right? Thank God, friends, we don't have to pay any attention to him.

You know, he never told Adam and Eve that through following the sort of advice he was peddling to them, he himself had lost paradise. He didn't let them in on that. If he had, his sales talk wouldn't have had much effect, would it?

"‘something better’ is the watch word..." *Steps to Christ*,
page 296.

...Trust. That's something better than worry, isn't it? Isn't it? Oh, that's a wonderful blessing. I'd never thought of it just that way. Isn't that nice? What a blessing it is that as we offer our last words of praise today for the blessings of today, we know that God has what? Something better for us tomorrow. My, my.

“There are angels hovering round,
There are angels hovering round,
There are angels, angels hovering round.

They will carry tidings home,
They will carry tidings home,
They will carry, carry tidings home.

To the New Jerusalem,
To the New Jerusalem,
To the New, the New Jerusalem.”

Ibid.

Some more tidings to carry home? Yes.

...It says to obey is better? That's what it says. That's the “something better.”

...One of those people that have helped you get acquainted with Jesus, there's something for you still better than they've ever shown you, right? What is it? The perfection of the character of Jesus Himself. Is that true?

So, no matter how others have disappointed us, we look from the human copy to the perfect pattern. And no matter how others have cheered us and inspired us,

we with them look to the perfect pattern, Jesus. He's the something better. And the fresh revelation of Him every day is sweeter than the day before.

[Man from congregation] I'm thankful for a statement that someone quoted to me this week, and I want to try to quote it to you tonight. We've been studying it. It's in *Ministry of Healing*. It says:

"Their happiness, both for this life and for the life to come, depends upon their fixing their minds upon cheerful things" *Ministry of Healing*, page 247.

That's been a lot of help to me. I think that that's what I need to do is fix my mind upon cheerful things always, and that is Christ and His way.

[Elder Frazee] Do you mean that when you and Mavis and Tammy go out tomorrow afternoon for the Sabbath walk, you're not going to try to hunt up every saw briar you can find and drag it home? You're not? Okay.

And if you get scratched, you're not going to take the worship period to tell us about it? You're going to bring some flowers home? Good.

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign,
My grace Redeemer, My Savior art Thou,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #321, first stanza.

If there's somebody here tonight that would like to be remembered in a special way in this closing prayer, just step right forward now and stand with bowed head here and we'll pray for you. If there's a special blessing you're needing, a special burden you want to lay down, special help you're seeking, just step forward now before we have this closing prayer.

That's right. God bless you. Just come right up on either side here so there'll be room for others. Just step right over and bow your head and tell Jesus what that burden is, and ask Him to take it. Tell Jesus what that need is, and ask Him to fill it. Tell Jesus what the sin is, and ask Him to take it away. Tell Jesus what the grief is, and ask Him to comfort you. Whatever the need, oh, there's help in Jesus, wonderful help. Isn't there, friends?

Oh, I'm so glad tonight. Is He going to give us something better? That's right, something better, something better tonight than yesterday, something better.

Dear Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing. In a special way, fill the need of every heart. Here are these who have come to this altar tonight asking for some special blessing. Lord, grant their prayer. Hear the request of Jesus in their behalf. May they know that their prayer is heard and that Christ has undertaken their case.

And with them, bless all of us. Draw us close to Thy dear side, and may Thy love so fill our hearts that we too shall have something better today, tomorrow. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

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