

If

#0594

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 22, 1963

God's big little words. It's little as far as the number of letters is concerned. It's very big, as you will see, in other ways. As I was thinking about this word, I thought, well, I'd like to see the first time that word is mentioned in the Bible. By the way, if you want something interesting on many different subjects, just find where a particular word, dealing with a particular subject, is first mentioned in the Bible.

Some commentators even think that there is something quite significant about it, and they call it the law of first mention. If you were going, for example, to the question of diet, what book of the Bible would you start with? You would start with Genesis. Do you know what the word Genesis means? Means beginning. I could go through quite a number of different things, and we'll find right there in those first few chapters of Genesis, significant words. Significant in the way they are first introduced.

Now to me, it's quite significant that the little word I want to study with you this morning is not found in the three chapters. I don't think it belongs in the first chapter at all, and it isn't there. But when I get over to the fourth chapter, I find it. I find it twice in one verse, the fourth chapter of Genesis. And it's quite significant that it is God who is using the word, and He's using it in something He says to a human being that needs to make a decision.

The fourth chapter of Genesis and the seventh verse:

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" Genesis 4:7.

The little word, of course, is the word with two letters. What is it?

[Audience] If.

[Elder Frazee] If, if.

Now let me say, friends, there is no if with God.

Before we get through our study this morning, I want to lead you into a story of an interesting experience where somebody tried to use that if on our Lord. I want you to see what he did with it. But God uses the word addressing a human being that needs to make a decision. Who was God talking to here? Talking to Cain. Cain needed to make a decision to go the right way instead of going the wrong way. And God said to him, "Now look here, Cain. If you do well, you will be accepted. But if you won't, then what?" "... sin lies at the door."

Sad to say, Cain went the wrong road at that fork. He took the left hand, the way of transgression, and became the first murderer—terrible experience. And Cain was lost—will be lost through all eternity because he didn't take the right-hand fork at God's if. God's great little word if, if, if.

There are many times through the Bible, God raises the question. He brings in that word if. And I hope that many of you will get so interested in this, this morning that you'll start watching for this little word—God's great little word.

We won't have time this morning to look at all of them. But we'll look at some of them. Let's go over now to the new testament, the 13th chapter of John, and the 17th verse. I like this. Jesus, you remember, was in the upper room with His disciples. He had washed their feet, taught them the precious lessons there at the communion table. And He'd given them the command to love one another. And now in this 17th verse, of the 13th chapter, He uses this little word, and again it is used twice in one verse. I'm going to ask you to read this one with me:

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"
John 13:17.

No if, if, then you'll be what? Happy. Now, does this mean everybody will be happy? No. No, there's an if. In fact, there are two ifs. Just like I might say, "*If* you'll take this quarter and go down to the store and get such and such a thing and bring it back to me, and I'm going to do something for you." We'll you'd have to do two things. You'd have to take the quarter and go down there to the store, and you'd have to trade the quarter for the thing and bring it back to me. Then I would be obligated to give you what I promised. Wouldn't I?

If, If. Now, what are the two ifs here? If he what? "Know these things" There are some things God wants us to know. I wonder where He put them? Why, He put them In the Bible. Now to take care of that "if" I need to study. Is that right? Yes. So, if I'll study the Word of God that takes care of that "if." But it isn't enough to just know it. I must what? Do it. Then I'll be what? Happy.

Whose business is it to make me happy? God's business. We can't make ourselves happy, but God can make us happy. And He tells us the recipe here:

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."
John 13:17.

Now, if you want to be happy and believe God, what will you do? Well, you'll study to know, and then you will do it. Is that right? And if you know it and do, then you will be happy. That's what God says.

Let's take another promise. Back in Exodus, the 15th chapter and the 26th verse. Exodus 15:26. This is such a wonderful promise, it sounds almost too good to be true, but it isn't. It is true. This is the promise the Lord gave the children of Israel through Moses early in their desert experience. You remember, they were needing water, they were very thirsty. And finally, way there in the distance, they saw some water. And the cry rang out through the great multitude, "Water, water!" They were

all very happy. But Moses' heart sank. He'd been a shepherd for many years right out there in that desert. He knew what that water was. That was Marah. Do you know what Marah means? It means bitter. That water was so bitter that He knew they wouldn't be happy when they got that.

I remember one time my wife and I were in the mountains, out in the Rockies, we were on a hike. We were thirsty. We came to a most beautiful stream of water gurgling down the mountain side. And we thought, "Oh, this is fine. We'll have a drink." But believe me, when we got down to get some of it, we weren't that thirsty. No, it was bitter, just like these waters, at Marah.

So, Moses knew the people would be disappointed, and sure enough, they were, and then they murmured. And Moses cried to God, and God showed him a tree. And he cut down that tree and put it in, and God healed the waters through that tree. And then when he'd done that, and the people drank of course of the water and were satisfied, then God said to Moses, Tell the people:

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" Exodus 15:26.

Is the Lord in the healing business? Yes, just like He healed those waters. But there's an "if."

Ah, somebody says, "That's the trouble."

Yes, that is the trouble. And there are those that seem to have the idea that God has promised to heal anybody and everybody without an "if." But He hasn't. He hasn't promised to save anybody and everybody without an "if." May I tell you, friends, there is an "if" to every promise of God. That's what I am studying with you this morning.

Sometimes it is express right there in the verse, like these we're studying. But whether it's expressed or not in the verse, it is *always* implied. And the person who takes a promise of God and goes out without the "if" and tries to cash it, is like a man that's trying to hold another man to a promise when he hasn't fulfilled the conditions on which the promise is made. There are conditions to every promise.

Now, what are the conditions here? God says, "If you just listen to what I tell you and do it, then I'll heal you."

Well, why not listen?

[Audience member] There are really four "ifs" there, aren't there? If thou wilt hearken, if thou wilt do, if thou wilt give ear and if thou wilt keep.

[Elder Frazee] Yes. Well, those are really a repetition. That often happens in the Bible; it's repeated. If you will hearken and do, give ear and keep. You see, hearken is the same as give ear and do is the same as keep. He just keeps pressing it home to our hearts. It's right back to what we read there in John 13:17:

"If ye..." John 13:17.

What?

"...know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17.

There are the same two things, again, you see. We have to listen in order to know, and then we have to act in order to do. Oh, that God may help us, this morning, to see how simple this is, dear friends. How simple. And if we meet the conditions, then we have the right to claim the promise.

Now, let's go over to the ninth chapter of Mark, and I want you to see the story of a man who tried to put the "if" on Christ. And Jesus wouldn't take it, as you'll see, turned it right back to him. Ninth chapter of Mark beginning with the 14th verse. If you read the whole story in the chapter, you will see that Jesus had been with Peter, James, and John up on the mountain. They had spent the night up there in prayer, and Jesus was transfigured. They had had a wonderful experience talking with Moses and Elijah. And filled with power, Jesus and the disciples came down. They found the other disciples down there at the foot of the mountain. A man had brought a boy to be healed. This seemed to be an especially hard case. The boy was possessed of a devil. The disciples had tried to cast out the evil spirit, and they couldn't.

And so here Jesus came, and they all ran to meet Him. And presently the man brought his boy, and right while they were there this the boy was thrown in a convulsion by this evil spirit. Jesus asked the man about it. Now notice what the man said:

"Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him..." Mark 9:22.

Think of it! A boy, sometimes an evil spirit will just throw him into the fire. Sometimes, throw him into the water, try to drown him. They'd have to run, take him out, you see, to save him.

Now notice as the man tells his story what he says:

"..but..." Mark 9:22.

What?

[Audience] If.

[Elder Frazee] If.

“...but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us” Mark 9:22.

That’s the way some people talk to God. “Oh, God *if* you can do anything, help me.” What did Jesus say?

“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” Mark 9:23.

He said, “Man, you are talking to me about “if.” The “if” is the other way around. There’s no “if” with Me. All things are possible. I am the Creator, and there is nothing too hard for the Creator. There’s no “if” to it. But oh, there is an “if. The “if” is with you, the “if” is with you. Will you believe? *If* you can believe, “all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Do you see how Jesus takes that “if” that the man hands to him and He hands it right back? There’s an “if.” “All right,” He says, “but it isn’t where you think it is. It isn’t with Me; it’s with you.”

I wonder if there’s anybody here this morning that’s been putting an “if” up to God? You know, some people try to bargain with God. Here is a man who is trying to quit tobacco. He wants to quit; he knows it may give him lung cancer or ulcers of the stomach or a coronary attack. He knows it dulls the mind—shortens life. He knows he ought to quit. He’d like to quit. So, he says, “Oh Lord, *if* you’ll just take away that desire, I’ll quit.” If, if.

You know what God says to that man, “The “if” is the other way around.” “If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Don’t wait for God to answer your “if.” You get busy this morning and answer God’s “if.” You see friends?

Take this matter of keeping the Sabbath. Here’s a man who hears the message of God. He sees that the seventh day is the Sabbath. Sunset Friday to sunset Saturday is holy time. And he says, “Oh Lord, if you’ll just help me get a job where I can keep the Sabbath, I’ll keep it as long as I live.”

Is that the way to pray, friend? No, no. That isn’t the way to pray. A man might pray when he didn’t know any better, just like this man did. But you know how God answers that pray? Just like he did this man. “*If* you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Do you see? We must step up to obey God.

I see dear Elder Tindall sitting here. I remember the first series of meetings as a young man, it was my privilege to assist him in San Francisco. I remember a dear man and his wife that came night after night to those tent meetings. And I remember the great test that came to that man. He was a baggage master down at a big steamship company on one of the docks down in San Francisco harbor. He’d done that for years. That’s what he was acquainted with.

And as he heard this message night after night, he was brought face to face with the test—what would he do about keeping the Sabbath. I remember the night that Elder Tindall and I went over to see this dear man and his wife. His name was

Smith, good common name. And I remember the struggle that dear man and his wife went through. But Elder Tindall helped him to see that the thing to do was not to wait until the job question got settled. The thing to do was to believe in Jesus and believe that God would help him one way or another to obey the commandments of God.

So that night, thank God, instead of putting the “if” up to God, that dear man and his wife answered God’s “if.” And he gave his heart fully to God to obey God.

Well, he went down told his employer. Now, notice, he didn’t go down and ask them whether or not he could keep the Sabbath. Oh, no. You don’t go ask *men* whether or not you can obey God. Why, the very idea!

You folks that have children, you tell your little girl or little boy to do something. Wouldn’t you think it strange if they’d run next door and ask the neighbor whether or not if they could do what you said? No.

He didn’t ask his employer if he could keep the Sabbath. In a kind but definite way, he explained to his employer that he had heard a message, and he knew now that the seventh day was the Sabbath and that he must keep it. He had to keep it.

Now you know there are some stories I could tell you about how people keep their jobs and get a raise afterward. And those stories are true, and they happen, but this one didn’t happen that way. No, his employer said, “Well listen, we have ships that unload here every day of the week, every hour of the day. And if you can’t be here when we need you, we’ll have to get a man who can.” So he lost his job.

And that dear man, he walked the streets of San Francisco for days and weeks, hunting for work where he could keep the Sabbath. But thank the Lord, he was faithful. He had answered God’s “if” instead of putting an “if” up to God. He and his wife were baptized. And he finally got into some health food work, baking whole wheat bread, brother. Yes sir, and taking it from house to house.

And several years later, when I came back there to San Francisco on a visit at the time of the General Conference, that dear man was one of the deacons in the church there, in fact, I think he was the chairman of the board of deacons. God had blessed him. He never got rich, friend, but he was able to make a living for himself and his family because instead of putting an “if” to God, he had answered God’s “if.”

Oh, it makes so much difference, friends, what we do about God’s big little word, “if.”

Now, I want to come back to the word Jesus said to the man. What was it the man said to Jesus? “If you can do anything, oh *if* you can do anything, please do it for me!”

Did you ever get into a problem, and you just felt, “Oh my, why isn’t something done? Oh, can God do anything about this?” “*If* you can, Lord, please do.”

No. God says that isn’t the way to go at it.

“...he that cometh to God must believe...” Hebrews 11:6.

“...without faith it is impossible to please Him...” Hebrews 11:6.

That’s the thing. And I am so glad that in this experience when Jesus told the man that:

“... straight way the father of the child cried out, and said with tears Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” Mark 9:24.

So, Jesus healed him, thank the Lord.

The boy was saved, healed because the father, instead of putting the “if” up to God, took hold of Jesus Christ’s “if” and he said, “Love, I do believe.” You say, “Lord, if you believe.” I say, “Lord, I do believe, therefore, fulfill your word to me.”

That’s the simple way to come to God, my friends. That’s the simple way to come to God.

Alright, now let’s go to the last book of the Bible. We started with Genesis. Now we are going to come over to Revelation. We can’t go any further. Third chapter of Revelation, the 20th verse. Here’s Chris’s little word “if” again. The big little word.

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

Now, what’s the next word? “If” Well, there’s our word again. ~~God’s~~ word God’s Word. God’s big little word. What is it? “If.”

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door...” Revelation 3:20.

There’s the listen and do something about it, you see. There’s the harken and take some action. There’s paying attention and then making a decision.

“...if any man hear My voice, and open the door...”
Revelation 3:20.

What?

“...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” Revelation 3:20.

Ahh, my friends, I cannot read your hearts here this morning. But I can tell you something. Everybody that is in this hall this morning is in one of two classes—either Jesus is in your heart, or He’s outside. And it isn’t a matter of whether your name is on the church book or not. It isn’t a matter of what your friends think about you. You might fool men. You might even fool yourself. But you never fool God.

But there's good news for anybody who's in the place where Jesus is on the outside. He is very close to you, friends. For in fact, this verse says He's how close? He is at the door. Do you know how close a person is that's at the door? Well, He's just as near as He can get without being inside. That's where Jesus is. If He isn't in your heart, He's just as close as He can get without being inside.

And why if He's that close, doesn't He come on in? Ah, "if." There's that little word standing there, friends. And all heaven stands powerless before the unsundered human will. The Creator of the universe waits on the porch. He knocks on the door. "If," "If." Oh, if you'll just listen and open the door, then I'll come in.

When will He come in? Just as soon as you open the door. There's that "if," friends, what will you do with it?

Ah, thank God, you can take hold of that door and open it. You can say like that dear man did (back there in Mark 9) you can fall down with tears and say, "Lord, I do believe, help Thou my unbelief. Come on in, dear Lord, come on into my heart. I want you inside. I want to *know* you are inside."

I want to tell you something, friends, the strongest man in the world will have to do it that way, or else he'll never get help. And the weakest person in the world can do it that way and get help, and get it that way this morning. It doesn't make any difference how big your sins are; Jesus can forgive them.

There's another one of those "ifs." I'm not going to turn to it, but 1 John 1:9:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

So, no matter what our sins are, *if* we'll bring them to Jesus, if we confess them, He'll take them away.

Here at the door, he stands. "if," "if," "if." How long will it take Him to come in? That depends on how long you wait to open the door. If you've waited a year, He's waited a year. If you've waited five years, He's waited five years. But you don't have to wait another five minutes. Thank God, *if* you open the door, He'll come in. There's the great little word.

Oh, Jesus, Thou art standing outside the fast closed door; Oh, Jesus, Thou art knocking, and low that hand is scarred.

Let's open the door and let Him in, what do you say? Those that have done it already, let's tell Him, again this morning, we love Him, and we want Him to stay inside. And any, this morning, that either has never let Him in or that have in the past and you've had Him go because there was something else you wanted him to do. Why not ask Him back in, friends? Why not. Why not take away that "if"? Why not get that "if" out of the way? Why not let the love of God fill the heart? Why not say, "Lord, you died for me, and I'll live for You? You said, "Open the door, and if you open the door, I'll come in, Lord. I'll open the door, you come in." I'd like that.

There's somebody here this morning that feels that God has spoken to your heart and that you need to make that kind of a decision this morning. In other words, you can in this hall, this morning, and there was an "if" that stood between you and God? But now, right now, instead of putting an "if" up to God, your going to listen to God while He says, "If you open the door, I'll come in."

Right here this morning, you're going to say, "Blessed Jesus, I will open the door." I'd just like for you to stand where you are. I'd like to give somebody an opportunity to make a decision this morning that will make Jesus happy. Somebody that will take hold of God's big little word "if," and you'll open the door, let Jesus come in. Just stand where you are.

Jesus says, "If we stand for Him here, He'll stand for us up there." You believe God has brought you to this meeting to get this blessing. And by God's grace, you are not going to merely listen but do something about it. You want to give everything to Jesus this morning, and you want to get out of the way of the thing that has been in the way. Will you just stand, just stand, where you are, and we'll pray for you? It doesn't matter if you're a church member or whether you're not.

I'm not talking about joining the church; I'm talking about opening the door. You might be a church member, but sin might have gotten in your heart and taken away Jesus, or you might not be a church member. But here, this morning, you hear Jesus knocking at the door and you want Him to come in—either for the first time or because you've lost Him and you want Him to come back, just stand.

I'm sure there's somebody here that Jesus is calling this morning. Because the One who knows tells me that in every congregation, there are souls that are hesitating, almost persuaded to be wholly for God. Oh, and somebody like that friend, if I could, I'd just open the door for you, but I can't. The "if" is on the inside. The "if" is yours—turn the handle, pull the lock and open the door. Ah, if there's somebody that hears Jesus' gentle knock and His sweet voice and says, "Yes, I know that Jesus is talking to my heart."

Song by Elder Frazee and [Brother Glanzer]

You must open the door,
You must open the door,
When Jesus comes in, He will save you from sin,
But you must open the door.

There's a Saviour who stands at the door of your heart,
He is longing to enter—why let Him depart?
He has called you so often in days long ago
Let Jesus come into your heart

You must open the door.
You must open the door
When Jesus comes in, He will save you from sin
But you must open the door.

~"You Must Open the Door"
Ina Duley Ogdon

Brother Glanzer, I wish we might sing, "Feel the lack of strength and far to do it." Is there anybody like that here? May I see your hand? Yea, now listen. I want to give you an opportunity to get some help. We are going to stand and sing this song and if there is somebody here that knows you need to get this help, but you don't have the strength you need to make the decision, but you'd like to get some help to make it, I want you to just come up here and take this front seats. We are going to have some seats here empty; I want you to come up and sit here on these front seats, and we are going to have prayer for you that Jesus will help you do it.

May I say a word to the young people, whether you're members of the church or whether you're not? I know what it is to be a young person and be sometimes in gear and sometimes out of gear. I wish I'd always stayed in gear, fiends. Sorry to say I always didn't. People around me, sometimes they knew when I was out, sometimes they didn't, but God knew, and I knew. I remember I was in a meeting once, just like this meeting here this morning, and a call was made, and I was a member of the church, a boy in my teens. But as that call was made, I knew there was something in my heart that needed to come out, and I had quite a tussle with myself. Thank God, Jesus helped me to come up, helped me to come up, and I got some help. And there wasn't anybody in that meeting who knew what it was that was going on in my heart. There wasn't a soul in that meeting that knew what it was that I was tussling about. The preacher wasn't talking about it, but God was talking about it to me. And dear ones, if you're not sure that Jesus is in your heart this morning, but oh, you wish you could get some help, just come up here and take these front seats, and we're going to pray for you. Let's stand while we sing.

I hear Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee,
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.
I am coming, Lord,
Coming now to Thee:
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary.

"I Hear Thy Welcome Voice"
Lewis Hartsough

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

"Just as I Am"
Charlotte Elliot

Dear friends, we are working with unseen agencies. You can see us who are standing here, and you can read the word, but oh, there're unseen agencies here

this morning—there are angels that go up and down these aisles, put their hand on a shoulder here and arm there and say, “Come, come.” The Holy Spirit speaks to hearts. Jesus is knocking on the door. Ah dear ones, we are right now at the point in the meeting when those unseen agencies must take over, but you must respond. I cannot read your hearts, but Jesus can. And if His Spirit speaks to you and says, “Oh, you need a blessing that you’ve not yet received,” come, seek for it. Won’t you come, friend? Won’t you respond to that gentle plea of the Holy Spirit? Children, young people, is everything right with you and Jesus? Has any sin come between you and the Master? Oh, if there has, why not come up here this morning and get help from Jesus. And getting that cloud moved out of the way, so the bright smile of Jesus shines upon you. Young and old, where the Spirit speaks, respond. Oh, come, you that Christ’s calls.

Just as I am, and waiting not...[Recording ended in progress]

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