

Be Careful What You Want

#0544

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 15, 1960

Will you turn, please, to Psalm 145? Our text is found in the 16th verse. Psalm 145:16. Would you read it with me, please?

“Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living creature” Psalm 145:16.

The Bible is a wonderful book and has some wonderful statements in it. This is one of those tremendous statements. God opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living creature.

What do you want? What do you want more than *anything* else? Well, let me say this, be careful *what* you want because you’re going to get it.

“Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living creature” Psalm 145:16.

Eventually, every human being is going to have *exactly* what he wants, *exactly* what he has chosen. God forces no one. He forces no one *into* Heaven or hell. Every soul reaps that which he has chosen.

This morning I would like to study with you for a little while, this wonderful mystery of human choice, and how God satisfies the desire, meets the choice of every human being. It’s true that God is omnipotent. It’s true that “...He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth...” (Daniel 4:35) But, ah, my dear friends, He has harnessed His infinite power and wisdom to the task of satisfying the desire of every living thing.

Now, in Eden, it’s easy to see there how every desire was satisfied. But lest there should be any possibility of any creature being able to say that God had not given His children the fullest opportunity for choice, God placed within the garden an *opportunity* for disobedience. In other words, He did not force man to obedience by giving him no other choice. He didn’t do that. He surrounded him with everything beautiful, lovely, and desirable. He put the tree of life there, with its lovely fruit, the power to perpetuate life forever. And then, He placed there also what tree? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, it was as if He said, “Which would you rather have: life or mixed knowledge? Life or mixed knowledge?”

There came a day when our first parents chose the one and lost the other. They *received* their choice. They had chosen to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil, had they not? And in sorrow, they were to eat of it all the days of their lives. And for over 900 years, Adam continued to eat of that tree which he had chosen. My point is, friends, he received the thing that he had decided for. His desire was granted. God did not withhold it from him.

So today, there are those who are eating at that tree of knowledge of good and evil, and God does not see fit to build a fence around it. He does not see fit to have electric wire there that will keep them from coming. The world is full of mixed knowledge today, like I don't suppose there ever was a time in the history of the world when the serpent was speaking from the tree, the way he is today. And all who *choose* to go in that direction will receive what Adam and Eve received. They will receive their own desires. They will receive their choice.

Let's come over to the 78th Psalm now, and I want to show you something interesting about the exodus movement. Many times in the book of Psalms, the experience of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt is referred to, drawing lessons for the people of God in after years. You remember that shortly after they passed the Red Sea they ran out of food. What food they had taken from Egypt didn't last very long. So they wondered what they were going to eat. But God had that all taken care of in advance. We read in the 78th Psalm, verses 24–25:

“[God] ...rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food...” Psalm 78:24–25.

“Angels' food,” that is, food provided by the angels. They must have been very dear to God, very precious to Him, for Him to supply them with such a diet. Think of it, friends: manna—food provided by the angels, a special act of God's love and God's tender care for them.

Now, in connection with that, God made them some wonderful promises. Let's go to Exodus, the 23rd chapter, and the 25th verse—a wonderful promise as they ate of the bread provided by God and drank of the water provided by God, for both their bread and their water were miraculously supplied. Exodus 23:25:

“And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” Exodus 23:25.

Isn't that fine? It was God's promise. It's for us too, by the way, friends. God was going to bless that bread that He rained from heaven and that water he brought from the rock, and using those agencies, communicate to them His life and take all sickness away so there wouldn't be *one* feeble one, *one* sick one, among them. What a promise, friends, for two million people! You would think that everybody would have readily accepted the plan and rejoiced in carrying it out. But let's go to Numbers, the 11th chapter and see what the reaction was by and by. Numbers 11:4–6:

“And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes” Numbers 11:4–6.

What did they want? They wanted flesh. Now, I want to ask you something, what would *you* have done? What would you have done if you had that problem on your hands? Well, Moses heard the people, the 10th verse says, weeping, just actually crying—men, women, and children—all through their tents:

“...And the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased” Number 11:10.

Well, Moses prayed about it, and you remember that before the chapter closes. There was plenty of what? Of flesh. Now there weren't any pigs or oysters or buzzards supplied. In His infinite love in giving them their request, God picked out the very best that He could do and still give them what they wanted. They wanted flesh, and He gave them what?

[Audience responds] Quail.

Quail.

I want you to turn over to the 78th Psalm again and read right out of the Bible that that's what they got, for don't forget my subject this morning is, be careful what you want for you're going to get it. The 78th Psalm, the 29th verse. We'll go back to the 26th verse to get the picture:

“He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by His power He brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea” Psalm 78:26–27.

Think of it, friends, there were thousands and tens and hundreds of thousands of quail coming in there. Whose power brought them? God.

“And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled...”
Psalm 78:28–29.

Read the rest with me:

“...for He gave them their own desire” Psalm 78:29.

What did He give them?

[Audience responds] Their own desire.

Do you see, friends? They wanted it and He gave it to them. Now, I don't know, it may be that there are some people that if they had been there, they would have felt that Moses was really on the wrong track to let them have any of it. Or they might have wondered why God would *do* that. They might have criticized God. But *did* God let them have the meat? Did He? Did He even provide it? Yes. Was it His desire for them? Oh, no. Well, why did He give them something that wasn't His desire? The answer is very clear because it was *their* desire. That's what it says, doesn't it?

"...He gave them their own desire" Psalm 78:29.

They got just what they wanted.

Now, lest we should not be sufficiently impressed with *that* verse, let's go over to the 106th Psalm and read the same thing over again in a little different words, the same thought exactly. Psalm 106:14–15:

"But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" Psalm 106:14–15.

There you have it. They desired a flesh diet, and they reaped its consequences. They wanted what they had had in Egypt, and they got some of it, friends. But oh, with it they got something else. What was it? 'Leanness of soul.' They wanted that flesh *more* than they wanted to be like God. And so they got the flesh. Physically their desires were satisfied, but, ah, in their souls there was a longing that was *never* satisfied.

You know, I hear from time to time a bit of discussion as to whether it's a sin to eat meat. Did you ever hear that question discussed? Well friends, personally, I would never say that it's a sin to eat meat. Jesus ate meat on several occasions, didn't He? Yes. And I wouldn't try to prove that it's a sin to eat meat. Jesus came down and ate meat with Abraham, didn't He? Yes.

"Well," you say, "I'm so glad to hear you say that, Brother Frazee, because I do like meat and now I can eat some." [Laughter]

You surely can, if you want to. That's correct. You surely can, if you want to. Man has *no right* to stop you, and God will *not* stop you. You know, meat-eating is not a test of fellowship in this church. You know that, don't you? Must be all right, then, isn't it? Anything that's not a test of church fellowship is all right to do, isn't it?

In the book *Evangelism*, page 664, there is a very interesting letter that Sister White wrote to one of our evangelists, nearly 60 years ago. This man was laboring in

New York City. He was quite an evangelist, but he was also quite a meat-eater. You can read about it here. And on this page Sister White says:

“Beware how you place yourself in opposition to the work of health reform.

...”Be careful what attitude you assume, lest you be found causing division. My brother, even while you fail to bring into your life and into your family the blessing that comes from following the principles of health reform, do not harm others by opposing the light God has given on this subject”
Evangelism, page 664.

You know, sometimes those who practice the principles of health reform that God has given and teach them are accused of causing division. But here, the Lord’s messenger lays that responsibility on the ones who *don’t* follow the light and who ridicule the message on health reform. *They* are the ones, says the Spirit of God, that cause division. Now I want to read this next sentence:

“While we do not make the use of flesh meat a test, while we do not want to force anyone to give up its use, yet it is our duty to request that no minister of the conference shall make light of or oppose the message of reform in this point. If, in the face of the light God has given concerning the effect of meat-eating on the system, you will still continue to eat meat, you must bear the consequences” *Ibid*.

Now friends, shall I tell you the sequel of this? Not very long *after* this, this prominent evangelist not only opposed health reform, but gave up the Sabbath and the whole message, and turned his energies to opposing the Spirit of Prophecy and the third angel’s message. That’s where he ended up. And we’ve been told by the One who knows that many who are now only half converted on the question of meat-eating will go from God’s people to walk no more with them (*Counsels on Health*, page 575).

But now, my subject this morning is not meat-eating, not at all. I very seldom speak of it. You’ve heard me in this pulpit dozens of times, and you know that that expression, or anything relating to it, very seldom passes my lips. Why? Because friends, there are many, many things that need to be presented, and this is just one of them.

And that isn’t my subject this morning. My subject is, getting what you want. And the experience of Israel in the desert is an example of that principle. And this evangelist is an example of that principle. Did the Lord’s messenger rein him up tight and say, “See here, Elder so and so, you’ve either got to quit eating meat or else?” Did she? No, no. She let him go right ahead. She *did* say that he oughtn’t to publicly oppose the health reform, and I suppose that we’d all agree with that, wouldn’t we? But what he did at his own table and in his private life was *his* business, in a sense. Is that right? Yes.

The church, what I mean by that, the *church* was not going to take disciplinary action on the matter.

I think we should be very careful, friends, in health reform and in every other reform, that we do not judge others. I think we ought to leave these things where God has left them. I think there are many of these points that we need to leave with the individual, just where God has left them.

But having said that, let me repeat my introductory sentence. Be careful what you want, for you're going to get it.

Oh, the thing that I long for this morning is that every longing of my heart shall be right, just right; that every desire of my soul shall be what God wants me to have. How does David put it?

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God” Psalm 42:1.

As we sang in our opening hymn:

Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts!
Thou fount of life! Thou light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

I remember dear old Elder Warren, Luther Warren. (There's a book about him now in the reading course this year. I hope you're reading it. It's wonderful. He was a very dear friend of mine.) I remember hearing him say once, about some young person that came to him and said, “Elder Warren, after I have read *all* the Bible that I ought to read for one day, and *all* the Spirit of Prophecy and *all* the books like that, read *all* that I ought to for a day, wouldn't it be all right if I'd read some fiction? I wouldn't be taking any time away from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. I've already read all I ought to for one day.” And I was very interested in his answer.

He said, “After I have drunk all the good spring water that I ought to drink for one day, every glass full, that my body needs, of good spring water if I want to go down here to the sewer and drink some of that, won't it be all right?”

What do you *like*, my friends? What is it you *desire*? What is it that makes you *happy*? Ah, I repeat, be careful what you want, for you're going to have it. Yes. Even the person that has once known the way of God, if he allows his heart to go back to the things of the world and the things of sin, if he allows his desires to *wander* in that direction, like Lot's wife looking back, there's where progress stops, my friends. 2 Peter the 2nd chapter and the 22nd verse:

“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb,
The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that

was washed to her wallowing in the mire” 2 Peter 2:22.

There it is. Some of you’ve heard me tell about the little pig that my wife saw in the express office. Somebody had taken the little fellow (it must have been a prize specimen, pedigreed and all that, I presume, by the care that was taken of him), somebody had taken him and washed him all up and cleaned him up and even powdered him. They put him in a nice little crate and were sending him from one place to the other. But you know friends, when he got to his destination and they turned him loose, do you know where he headed for? The hog wallow. Why? Because he was a hog. [Audience laughter] That’s right. He got what he wanted. He got what he wanted.

And that’s what Peter says, that there are some people in God’s church like that. They *want* the things of this world. They want the dress of this world, the reading of this world, the amusements of this world, the jokes and foolishness of this world, the diet of the world. They want the *life* of this world. And friends, will they get it?

Oh friends, you can build up all the barriers you want, and there’ll be *some* way to break through and get back to that wallow. Yes, yes. That’s right.

Have you ever notice right out here in the country, away from ten thousand temptations, how that some people seem to find certain things that other people don’t even know are around? I could illustrate it with cigarettes. Now, do you know that weeks and weeks and weeks could go by, and most people here would not know where there was a cigarette on this place? But I want to tell you something, if there’s somebody here that’s just *wanting* a cigarette and *wanting* a cigarette and *wanting* a cigarette, do they sometimes find it? Oh, yes. I wonder why they do...

I repeat friends, be careful what you want, for sooner or later there’ll be some way for you to get it. Whether it’s a book of fiction or a comic book or a TV with all its fiction and artificial drama and scandals and all the rest—whatever it is you want, whatever you set your heart on... Ah, be careful, for someday it’s coming.

Let’s go and read another chapter about it now, 1 Samuel, the eighth chapter. This is a great example of the lesson we are studying this morning. This is the story of Samuel. You remember he was judge over Israel for many years—the last of the judges. And why the last? Ah, *that’s* the point. Appointed by God, “...Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life” (1 Samuel 7:15). They came to him from Dan to Beersheba to hear his witness for the Lord and to let him teach them the truth of God.

But there finally came a day when the heads of the people came to Samuel, and I can see them coming. They’ve talked it over. They have rehearsed their speech, and they’ve thought up some good reasons, some excuses. What is their request? The fifth verse:

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together,
and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold,

thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” 1 Samuel 8:4–5.

Make us a what? A king. But they gave themselves away in that last expression. Like what?

[Audience responds] All the nations.

Like all the nations. They wanted to be like the nations.

Now friends, how did Samuel feel about it? The next verse says it displeased Samuel. It was evil in his eyes, the margin says. It made him feel bad. It broke his heart. And Samuel prayed to the Lord:

“And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee...” 1 Samuel 8:7.

Why, how surprised Samuel must have been! Samuel thought what they were asking for was the wrong thing. Was it? Yes. But God said, “Samuel...” do what? “Give it to them.” It must have been all right, then wasn’t it? No. It was like the quail, friends, like the quail. It would have been much better if they’d let God rule them directly through judges, as He chose from time to time, wouldn’t it? Much better. But they *would* have a king.

Now God in His mercy said, “Samuel, first call them together and tell them what the consequences are going to be.” And most of this chapter is taken up with Samuel telling them. And they knew that that man was a prophet of God and that he spoke by revelation. He warned them of the terrific taxes they would have, the forced servitude, the troubles and the trials, and that finally, they would *cry* in misery. And when he got through *all* that, he said in the 18th verse:

“And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day” 1 Samuel 8:18.

“Nevertheless” is the next word. After hearing the whole story given by God’s prophet of what the consequences were going to be:

“Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us; and go out before us, and fight our battles” 1 Samuel 8:19–20.

See? So all that God said proved ineffective, and all that Samuel said proved ineffective. They said, “We want a king.” So what did God say? Twenty-second verse:

“And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and

make them a king..." 1 Samuel 8:22.

Now, there's no way to explain a thing like this except on the same basis as these other experiences we've already studied, and that is, God satisfies the desire of every living creature. Eventually, people get what they choose. They get what they want. And so *again* I say, be careful *what* you want, for you're going to have it.

You know, years ago, before any of us here this morning were born, I suppose, there was a crisis that arose in our work in Battle Creek. The Battle Creek College had been started in 1874, the year our first missionary went out to Europe, and contrary to Sister White's urgent pleas and specific appeals, it was started on the edge of town in Battle Creek. She had desired, in harmony with the Lord's instructions, that it be in the country.

Well, she didn't separate from the church or from the college. The people got what they wanted, you understand. The prophet of God stayed right on, just as Samuel stayed right on, and tried to help all she could. James and Ellen White worked together to try to place that college on vantage ground, and for several years it was doing a fairly good work, although the problems that came through having it there on the edge of town began to multiply—couldn't help that.

In 1881, James White died. Sister White went west: California, Colorado. And just at that time, as it would work out, a new man came in as president of Battle Creek College. His name was McLaren. He had only been in the truth for a short time. He was a bright, dashing fellow, well-educated, as the world measures. There were some who were just pleased so much because a man of such polish and education and degrees, and all that sort of thing, could lead out in that work.

But it happened that there was a man in that college by the name of Bell, Professor G.H. Bell. He didn't have degrees, but he had a very solid practical education, particularly in English. And he believed in making the Bible the basis of education. And he believed the *Testimonies*, and he had been trying to carry them out.

Well, you can read the story in Professor Spaulding's wonderful book, *Captains of the Host*. You can read the story of the conflict that arose there on the faculty. And, ah, friends, before it was over, there was such a crisis that Professor Bell was forced to resign. Those who were leaning toward the world and trying to mold the college after the pattern of the world gained the upper hand, and Professor Bell was forced to resign. He went east and founded South Lancaster Academy, later developing into Atlantic Union College.

In the meantime, Sister White wrote these wonderful things that are found in these two chapters in Volume 5 called "Important Testimony" and "The Testimonies Slighted." It begins on page 45 and runs over to 84. If you want something very interesting, read these two chapters. It was what the prophet of God wrote to the people in Battle Creek concerning that crisis in which many arranged themselves on the wrong side, on the side of worldly education, worldly amusements, worldly dress, and

worldly life as it was intruding itself into a Seventh-day Adventist school and church and community. I want you to notice as you read it, her earnest appeals to leaders to stand on the right side instead of the wrong side.

Now, the most interesting thing in these two chapters is that as Sister White draws near the end of these earnest appeals, in 1882, like the prophets often did, she saw on through to the future. And with that local crisis in Battle Creek, she linked the approaching crisis that we *all* must pass through in the finishing of this work. You'll find that clearly brought out on pages 80, 81, and 82, where the approaching crisis over the mark of the beast is linked with the crisis that they were then going through in Battle Creek.

On page 77, right in the heart of this message, comes this statement, and I read it this morning on this point: be careful what you want, for you will have it; you will get it. That's true of individuals; it's true of local churches; it's true of institutions. We should be careful what we desire, what we applaud, what we crave, what we appreciate, for like appreciates like. We should be careful what we go after and what we long for, for it will come to us or we will go to it. Listen as I read now, page 77:

“The patience of God has an object, but you are defeating it. He is allowing a state of things to come that you would fain see counteracted by and by, but it will be too late”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 77.

Go back to what we were just studying about Samuel and them making a king. Did they get a king?

[Audience responds] Yes.

How did it turn out? Ah, my friends, what a sorry story the life of Saul is! God did everything for him that a God could do to get him on the right track, but Saul finally ended up at the witch of Endor, listening to a spiritualistic medium, and then dying on Gilboa with the Philistines conquering.

Then, David came along. And while God did a great work through David, oh, what a checkered history. And Solomon, God accomplished a wonderful work through Solomon, but, oh, what an apostasy he led out in. And then read on down through that sad, sad story of Jeroboam and all the kings of northern Israel, not one of them doing everything that God said. Read the ups and downs of the kings in Jerusalem. Now and then, a brightly shining one, like Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah or Josiah, but oh, so many walking in the ways of sin, and not one of them ever succeeding in *fully* bringing the nation back to the place where it was when Samuel was the judge in Israel, and the Spirit of prophecy guided the people directly. Such were the consequences of the nation getting what it wanted.

Ah friends, it is a dangerous thing for us to take anything less than God's best

plan. Do you know it? And so I come back to this statement where God warns us. I do not pretend to know all that it means. I read it to you just as it's here:

“The patience of God has an object, but you are defeating it. He is allowing a state of things to come that you would fain see counteracted by and by, but it will be too late. God commanded Elijah to anoint the cruel and deceitful Hazael king over Syria, that he might be a scourge to idolatrous Israel. Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, ‘Peace, peace,’ when the Lord hath not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that ere long all prophesyings among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers” *Ibid.*

Ah, my dear friends, the alarm clock can ring, and I can open my dozy eyes and lift my head and reach over there and do what? Turn it off. But oh, suppose somebody comes along and says, “Surely, he ought to get up. I’m going to set it for another half hour.” And thirty minutes later, it rings again, and what can I do? Oh, I can wake out of my stupor, and I can reach out over there and do what? Turn it off. And friends, if that thing keeps up, what happens one of these times? I won’t hear it anymore. I get what I want. I get what I want.

God will not *a/ways* disturb us. He will not always shake us and stir us and force us to attention. He is satisfying the desire of every living creature.

Let’s turn now to 2 Thessalonians, the second chapter. Before I read this, let me say, dear friends: this is God’s church. This is God’s movement. It was started by a marvelous work in 1844, and it will go through to the end. There are no off-shoots that are led of God. This is God’s movement, and it’s going through, but this movement will be terribly shaken. And all those who love something else better than God’s *complete* will and His *full* way will eventually go out and get it. They will go out and get the thing that they want. And in the meantime, God allows people to have a measure of what they want, even within the movement, doesn’t He?

Before I read this in Thessalonians, I want to read you something from Elder McElhany, for many years the president of the General Conference. This was in a sermon given at the General Conference in 1941. It’s in the *Review and Herald* of June 3, 1941:

“I believe, my friends, that the hour is come when the call

should sound out to the church to come up to a new and higher plane of living. Do you think that the standards of the church are too high? No. A thousand times no. Well, let us live up to them. What do you say? I want to tell you, my friends, the church is being permeated today with the spirit of the world, with a looseness of conduct. And I am sure that if the Lord were to sit in judgment on the cases of many today, it would be discovered that they are living far below the way Christians should live in respect to these things” Elder McElhany, *Review and Herald*, June 3, 1941.

Now watch this sentence:

“I believe, my friends, that it is our privilege to live on an even higher level than is required by the standards set for us by the church” *Ibid*.

What’s that?

“I believe, my friends, that it is our privilege to live on an even higher level than is required by the standards set for us by the church. Certainly we should not live on a sub-standard. We ought not to live below the standards set for us by the church, but it is the privilege of everyone, individually and personally, to live even above these” *Ibid*.

Why friends, the entrance requirements for a school are not the graduation requirements, are they? Are they? Oh, no! To get into college, you have to know certain things, but do you have to know more to get out? Yes, to graduate. And the tests of fellowship in the church are the things that you are supposed to know and do in order to get *in*. Is that right? But oh, to get *out* and go on into Heaven, to graduate from this preparatory school to the one in Heaven, we’re going to have to go way beyond what is the actual requirement. Do you see? Very clear.

But as I said a while ago, we’re not to try to force *others* into those details, but we should individually set our hearts on nothing less than God’s full, complete will, and not only to know it and do it but to *love* it. That brings me to this text now, in 2 Thessalonians, the second chapter, where Paul warns us of the approaching world-wide deception of Satan and tells us *why* so many are going to be deceived. 2 Thessalonians 2:8–12:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish...”

2 Thessalonians 2:8–10.

Why?

“...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”
2 Thessalonians 2:10–11.

Do they believe it? Oh, yes. Why? They didn't love the truth. If you don't love the truth, there's only one other thing to have. What's that? A lie. No lie is of the truth, but anything that *isn't* of the truth is a lie. So if people don't love the truth, they want what? A lie. They may not *call* it that, but that's what they want if they don't love the truth. Do they get it, eventually? Oh, that's the point, friends. Be careful what you want for you're going to get it.

“For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned...”
2 Thessalonians 2:11–12.

That word “damned” means condemned or judged.

“...Who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” *Ibid.*

Where is your pleasure, friends? Is it in the Bible or is it in some fiction book? Is it in the messages that have come from God or some exciting drama on the radio or TV? What is it you *really* like? When nobody is watching, do you go with the pig down to the wallow, or do you go with the lambs up to pasture, to the green grass?

What is it you *really* want in your inner soul? Ah, if there is one *vestige* of longing after the things of this world in diet, in dress, in reading, in music, in association, in conversation, in education, in *anything*, my friends, if there is one vestige of longing after those things, I plead with you, ask God to change your heart and do not stop until it's *done*. Plead with God day after day because merely keeping yourself, shall I say, by main effort—surely you ought to keep out of the hog wallow if you have to hold yourself, but oh, unless you get past that, eventually you will wear out and tire out, and go back to it. There must come into your soul a longing for the things of God, a *delight* in the things of God.

Take this matter of the Sabbath. Isaiah, the 58th chapter and the 13th verse: call the Sabbath a what?

[Audience responds] A delight.

A delight. Is the Sabbath a delight to you? Listen, friends, if it is, you will never give it up. But if it isn't, eventually, *eventually*, some deception will come along, and

you'll see that you don't have to, or some persecution will come along, and you'll be more *afraid* of what men will do to you than anything else, and you'll give it up.

Years ago, when I was a young minister, I was assisting dear Elder Lewis Folkenberg in a series of meeting in Watsonville, California. I passed through Watsonville just a few months ago, and I thought of our experiences together in the tent that was pitched there. Well, this one experience that I'm going to tell you about has never left my mind. I have thought of it many a time.

There was a dear woman there, rather elderly, who came to our meetings. She was much impressed with the truth. And in a call for a public decision, she came forward with others and with a full decision to accept the Sabbath. She believed the seventh day is the Sabbath, and she was going to keep it.

Well, do you know friends, it was only a few days that passed by, and I didn't see her at the meeting anymore. So I went over to see her. And I knocked at the door, and nobody came. And I knocked again, and presently the door opened a little, and there she was. But she didn't seem very glad to see me. But presently, she opened the door and let me in.

And, friends, to make the story short, do you know what I found? That woman said, "You know, Mr. Frazee, I was going over to the meetings there at the tent, and it seemed that the Bible said to keep Saturday." But she said, "You know, the more I thought about it, the more I thought, 'Do I really have to leave the church that I've been in all my life and go against all my relatives and all my family? Would God expect that of me?' And so," she said, "I prayed about it to the Lord, and He has shown me that I don't have to do it."

Ah friends, do you see? Do you see the fulfillment of this text that I've just read here in 2 Thessalonians 2? And when I tried to help that dear woman the best I knew, when I even suggested that it *might* be possible that somebody besides the Lord *might* have answered her prayer, why friends, she didn't like it at all. And there was nothing I could do in sorrow but to leave. Ah, she had made her choice. She got what she wanted. She wanted a way out so she didn't have to take the unpopular Sabbath. She wanted to remain with her church, her family. And it's a very *natural* thing, isn't it friends, a very *human* thing? But oh, such a *dangerous* thing.

Do you love the truth, *every* bit of it? Do you love the holy Sabbath day? God give you a deep love for it, friends, that you'd rather be burned at the stake than to give it up, not just so you can go to Heaven or keep out of hell, but because you love the *truth*.

Do you love the church? Ephesians 5, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. If you love as *He* loves, you'll love *what* He loves. You'll love this church, God's remnant church, love it so much that you would rather *die* than bring any reproach upon its fair name. You'd be willing to give your life at any time.

Do you love everything that God has said in His holy law and in the testimonies of His Spirit?

“Well,” somebody may say, “There are some things I don’t understand.”

Well, of course, friends. That’s what eternity is for; to work on those things we don’t understand. But I’m so glad that we can love things we don’t understand. We don’t understand all of God, but we can love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, can’t we? Thank God.

Now in closing friends, I’d like to take you to Matthew, and I want you to see something in the 27th chapter here. You can read the chapter, but you remember the scene. It’s in Pilate’s judgment hall. Christ has been seized at midnight by the mob and carried through the farces of trials before Annas and Caiaphas, and before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, and over to Herod, and now He’s back with Pilate.

Pilate is weary with the arguing with the multitude. And he conceives of a plan that he hopes will get him out of a dilemma. He brings a hardened criminal from the jail. His name is Barabbas. He puts Barabbas on one side and dear Jesus on the other. And he refers to a custom that was prevalent there among the Jews and the Romans at that time, under which, at Passover time, one prisoner was released to them on the feast day. Now he says, “Which will you have released: this robber, this murderer, this chief of criminals, or Jesus?”

And oh, friends, what do they say? Barabbas! Barabbas! Barabbas! Where do they get those thoughts? Ah, you can read it here, friends. You can read all about it in the 27th chapter, but I want to read you a comment on it here from *The Desire of Ages*. I want you to see what the comment is from Inspiration and what took place that Friday morning:

“The people of Israel had made their choice. Pointing to Jesus they had said, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas.’ Barabbas, the robber and murderer was the representative of Satan. Christ was the representative of God. Christ had been rejected; Barabbas had been chosen. Barabbas they were to have. In making this choice they accepted him who from the beginning was a liar and a murderer. Satan was their leader. As a nation they would act out his dictation. His works they would do. His rule they must endure. That people who chose Barabbas in the place of Christ were to feel the cruelty of Barabbas as long as time should last”
The Desire of Ages, pages 738–739.

Is it still going on, friends? Oh, yes. But now with that I must put this statement from *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 131:

“Today”

“Today...” When? What did I read?

[Audience responds] Today.

“Today men are choosing Barabbas men are choosing Barabbas, and saying, Crucify Christ. They will do this in the person of His saints. They will go over the same ground as the Jewish priests and rulers did in their treatment of Christ. He, the Son of God, and an innocent man, was murdered because He told men truths that it did not please them to hear” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 131.

That’s why He was murdered.

So friends, that choice between Christ and Barabbas is not just a historical one. This morning men are choosing between Christ and Barabbas. And listen, friends, did God let them have what they chose? Oh, yes. The robber, the murderer, was released to them, and the Son of God, whom they despised, was nailed to the cross.

But were there a few that loved Him? Yes. Did Nicodemus, one of the rulers of the Jews, step forward? And as he beheld that Savior on the cross did he say, “This is the One like the one lifted up by Moses in the wilderness; this is the true Messiah”? Did he? Did that thief hanging on the cross by His side, did he look across there and see Him and recognize Him as the Lamb of God? Yes. And did the centurion that commanded the group that led Him to Calvary, did he in that last moment of the Savior’s life, as He gave that cry in His expiring agonies, did he, too, confess his faith and say, “Truly this man was the Son of God?” Ah friends, did they get what they wanted? Yes, they got a Savior that day. But all the others got a murderer—they got Barabbas.

What do you want this morning? What do you want, more than anything else in this world, friends? Is it money? If you go after it, you may get it. Is it fame? If you go after it, you may get it. Is it position? You may have it if you go after it.

[Recording ended in progress]

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