

PLAIN TALK
ON
Christ In You

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Chapter 1
The Hope of Glory

Do you realize that a believer in Jesus Christ can expect to become more godly every day?

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). We are indebted to the Apostle Paul for this inspiring verse. He is considered to be the typical believer in Jesus Christ, the outstanding Christian in the New Testament. Despite much suffering because of physical limitations, the burden of his ministry, and persecution, Paul lived a joyful life, praising God for His goodness and thanking Him for His grace. In Romans 5:1, 2 we read about the secret of a life of joyful blessedness:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Did you notice we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, because God has forgiven us and has taken away our sins? But there is more, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Paul rejoiced in confident assurance that God would get the job done in him.

Now glory is used in the Bible in relation to harvest: the glory of an apple orchard is the barrels of apples; the glory of a peach tree is the basket of peaches. Glory does not refer to fireworks in heaven. No doubt there will be glorious beauties there but Paul rejoiced in what God is doing now in the world. The harvest means the completion of God's work now. In another place Paul writes, "For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." Not just sometime, not just some people – anyone who is a believer.

The Lord Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." That is what glorifies God. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. This is what God is doing now in the believers. And Paul rejoiced in hope, confident expectation, of the glory of God. In Paul, God was able to get the job done. Paul's confidence was grounded in Christ Jesus who died for us, and in verse 9 he says, "We shall be saved from wrath through him."

Some people would say wrath is a companion word to glory. It may be almost shocking to realize, but God works in both the evil and the good. When I do evil, I receive the cursing of God which adds up to the wrath of God; when I do good, I receive the blessing of God which adds up to the glory of God. Both

wrath and glory come from God. Every believer in Christ has the flesh, that is the old man; and the spirit, that is the new man. They are both in the believer. The flesh amounts to self, I; and the spirit in all that He is doing amounts to Christ, and these two are in the believer. He has his own personal ideas and Christ in him has His ideas.

Paul was more specific about the wrath of God and what it means in Romans 1:18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven." I once thought the wrath of God would occur after I died; it was associated with hell. I am satisfied to leave it there but it is far closer than that. In verses 24, 26 and 28 of that same chapter, one statement stands out, "God also gave them up to uncleanness." Few of us have in mind that God would give anybody up. He does. And those verses will tell you exactly who God gave up to uncleanness. This is the wrath of God.

When a natural person is provoked to anger he is prompted to retaliation and in that anger to retaliate, he has sinned. Sin in the heart produces more sin. A believer can be provoked to anger and the temptation to sin is there but the believer has a living Savior in heaven, Jesus of Nazareth (now glorified as Christ) interceding for him. A normal experience of the Christian is that in time, often sooner than you think, anger is gone. No wonder the Scriptures say "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Anger will fade and Paul knew this. He says in Romans 5:9 and 10, "We shall be saved from wrath through him . . . by his life." Not by the life He lived as Jesus of Nazareth, but by the life He lives now in the presence of God, where He is praying for us. And because of this Paul rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.

What does that mean again ? That is why we glory in tribulation also because God not only has the High Priest, Jesus Christ, praying for me but in providence He does something else: He leads me through trouble. It is a process by which evil in us is actually hoed out and because God will get the job done you and I can and will be better tomorrow. Can you think of that? No wonder the apostle Paul said, "We glory in tribulation."

Chapter 2

Christ Liveth in Me

Do you realize that a believer in Christ does not face problems of living alone?

Much of living is not for us to determine. Each of us has a heritage: we have parents, grandparents and we live in a certain community. The community is the one we were born into and the providence of God has watched over us all through our life. Some aspects of living depend on our free choice. In living, we can be successful: we call that blessed. We can be unsuccessful: and the best word we can use there is distress. This will depend on our choice.

Ordinarily, as we go along, we have opportunities to choose this or that and often, when the day is over, it has not been good; yet we did the best we knew how. Is there any way of knowing what you could do for blessing? Yes, there is. It may sound strange but if you read the Ten Commandments you would know. The Ten Commandments were not designed to meet some need that may be obvious to us; the Ten Commandments are projected out of the nature of God and these are the things he expects of His creatures. And so, if I want to have success in living, following the pattern of the Ten Commandments, I will worship God; I will respect those who are in authority; I will regard other people and I will relieve the poor. I would then be blessed.

You might say that is simple, anyone could do that. But the chances are that he will not because all of this calls for self-control, self-denial and self-direction. And the fact that I need to control myself, deny

myself and direct myself drains my vitality. I wear out; I cannot keep it up. All of this resulted in a crisis for me while teaching school, shortly after becoming a believer. I was in one room with 43 pupils – nine grades. There were children in that one room from six to sixteen years of age. My vitality and stamina each day were being exhausted. Not only did I have to keep order, but also I had to teach them something. School hours were nine to four and by 3:30 I was out of whatever it took; soon I began to feel that way about 3:00 and then 2 o'clock and I realized the time would come when, by 1 o'clock I would have no grace in my heart for the rest of the day.

I was the only young person in the community who professed faith in Christ; I was a missionary volunteer. Many of the people had never seen a missionary and naturally they watched me closely. Realizing that a blow-up on my part would hurt my testimony, I applied myself to the task of trying to avoid it. From my Bible reading came this truth: Christ liveth in me. Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Could I apply that for me?"

I made a plan: I would yield myself into the hands of the living Lord and I would count on Him to be in me to handle that school situation. He would use my equipment – my personality, my presence and my expertise but He would do it with His Spirit. If the children were annoying, they would annoy Him and if they were disobedient, they would be disobedient to Him. I was to say and do only what He prompted me to do. No one else would know – the children would think they were dealing with me, but I would know.

As I thought about this I felt uneasy; I was afraid He would go so easy on them I would lose all control in that school. But I decided that I was about to lose control anyway and I would risk it. So, on Monday morning I went to school early, as I often did, and I did everything I felt He wanted me to do. I greeted the children and I gave them their place to work and so on. All morning things went well and by noon I had the unworthy thought that if it was going to be as easy as this I could have handled the situation myself. However, in the afternoon something happened; in the school were two brothers who lived in the country. They came to school riding on the back of one horse and they came every second week. They were 11 and 13, a little old for their class because they had not come to school often; they were two out of five in grade 5. That week the McIver boys were there and their particular problem – long division and decimals – came up. The younger brother could not get it. He made a mistake in one problem and I set up another problem for him. He worked it and made another mistake; I helped him again and the whole school became very quiet. I felt in my heart a sense of chagrin when I realized they expected me to blow up.

I prayed in my heart to God, "What shall I do?" And it came to me, "He doesn't know it yet; he is here to learn. Teach him." Everybody expected me to blow up but I was at peace. Eventually he did get it to his great joy and I could have shouted. I knew from that moment I did not have to carry the load and here is a truth: He can do it for you. The Lord will operate in you and through you and by you to endure and to advise, to achieve, to get things done. And you can trust in Him.

Chapter 3

I Can Do All Things

Do you realize that with the help of the Lord a believer in Christ can endure anything?

Life has occasions of discomfort and distress. Trouble is sometimes natural, like weeds in the garden or pests in the air, like mosquitoes, gnats. Sometimes this trouble is unavoidable, like having to get up in the morning and going to work, or enduring toothache. Sometimes this trouble is personal – a noisy neighbor or an annoying companion, perhaps even an enemy.

I am now going to share with you an occasion when I had a long period of discomfort and was helped. In the spring of 1917 I volunteered for military service in the Canadian Army. Because of defective eyesight, I was assigned to a service unit and I joined the Canadian Army Veterinary Corp. There were eighteen men in the unit; it was self-contained, occupied one barrack room, treating horses that belonged to two cavalry units and one field artillery unit. I was a school teacher. Now in Western Canada a man school teacher was an oddity; people thought I should be wearing a dress. When the men in the unit heard that a school teacher was joining they planned some sort of initiation. When I arrived – husky, able, weighing about 180 pounds – they were baffled and frustrated. But in a few days they found my weak spot; they discovered that I could not tolerate profanity or obscenity. So that became their thing and since we slept in one room, worked in the one stable and rested in one small waiting room, all day, all night I was in their presence; they had ample opportunity. I received the usual rookie treatment; I was given all the menial tasks to perform around the stable, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I grew up on the farm.

We had about thirty horses to take care of and at home we had from 35 to 40 head of horses and cattle and I did the work alone. Every moment we were together as a group there was one dirty joke after another. I did not laugh and that egged them on. They used profane language which I could not endure. I prayed to the Lord about the situation and I expected relief and none came. I was mad, I was hurt and I was concerned. Why didn't the Lord do something? No other recruit was added for three months so I received prolonged treatment. I tried reading and I tried to analyze what was happening. There was no answer to prayer. I would read, "I will be with thee" and "Whatsoever ye ask, I will do." But there was no relief and I was about to give up, and decided if the Lord would not help I would cut this short.

On a given day I set a deadline. When the day was over, during the night, I decided I would do something. I would allow three more jokes, then I would tear the place up. The next day while in the waiting room reading *Les Miserables*, they started. They told one joke, I didn't laugh. They told two, I didn't laugh. I put the book away and got ready; I had my man spotted – the toughest one. They started the third joke and I was on the edge of the bench, ready to jump, and the alarm siren went off.

That was the only time in the year and a half I was in the army they had an emergency alarm. Everybody had to line up and that meant to me my Lord did not let me blow up. With the temptation He had provided a way of escape. He was watching over me. After that I was relaxed and at ease, almost amused by their attempts to annoy me. About ten days later one fellow told a joke – nobody laughed. Another told an ugly yarn – nobody laughed. Then one fellow said, "I guess we could do something better than tell these dirty yarns."

I remained in that unit for another year and there was never again in my presence one dirty joke told; there never was one obscene comment. With only two exceptions there was no profanity and in those two cases the men apologized. I never forgot that in my extremity my Lord intervened: He pulled the alarm siren. I was in the army for nearly two years and that was the only time I was called out on one of those drills, but I was that very morning – just that way. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Chapter 4 You Are My Witness

Do you realize no one will ever know about Christ Jesus unless he is told?

Everything true about Jesus Christ is invisible. There is nothing tangible or obvious. The only persons

who can tell about Him are the persons who know Him. He came to seek and to save the lost and He does this through persons who belong to Him. You will remember the case of the Samaritan woman at the well; when she had finished talking with Jesus of Nazareth she went back to her village and told the people of all that she had heard from Him. "Is not this the Christ?" Each believer is a witness: good or poor as the case may be, but a witness none the less.

For me witnessing was always a big problem. When I was called out of the law office to give my life over to telling the Gospel story, I thought I was to go as a missionary. I needed training so I went to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Included in the curriculum was a course called "Shop Work" when we learned about witnessing to people in the shops. The usual procedure was for six students to go in a station wagon to some shop at noontime when they had permission to distribute tracts among the people and to invite them to a central place where there would be a fifteen minute preaching program with singing and a message.

In my lifetime I had never handed anything to anybody that concerned Jesus Christ. At the same time, in my own life I had a personal spiritual problem. Was I really a believer; was I one of His?

When I went to the Bible Institute we studied the Bible a great deal more closely than I had ever studied it and I began to question myself. I was studying I John and I was intelligent enough to know that was the right Scripture because those things were written that we might know. I read in chapter 3, verse 14 these words, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." That was a clear statement but the question was – did I? Could I be sure I loved the brethren. When I went on my first shop work assignment, I went to a certain shed where about twelve men were eating lunch. I was to distribute the tracts and invite the men over to a central place where there would be a service.

I had never offered anything that was related to Christ Jesus to anybody. When I went in the door and saw the men sitting around eating their lunches I picked out the oldest man, thinking he would probably be the easiest to approach and offered him a tract. He looked up at me and in a gruff voice said, "Politics or religion?" When I replied, "Religion" he said, "Take it away" and he swore at me. In Canada where I grew up you do not swear at men. You can swear at a plow, a horse or the weather but not at men. In the course of my lifetime only on one other occasion had anyone ever sworn at me. It occurred at a party and the chairman of my school board, who was drunk at the time, carelessly swore at me. I got my hat and coat and went home. Two days later, in a snowstorm, I found him four miles away. I called him outside with one man there as a witness. When I asked him if he remembered the incident on Friday night he replied that he did not remember much about that night. When I told him what he had said he replied if he said that he was a fool. Standing close enough to strike him, I reminded him he was a drunken fool. Deep in my heart a volcano of fury started to erupt but suddenly compassion flooded my heart. To my consternation and surprise I found myself filled with concern; my heart was filled with joy. I had evidence. "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

That night at the report meeting when students told about the people they had met and the men they had won, I gave my testimony. I had found out I was a real believer. The next week we went to the same place and I went straight to the same man. He looked at me. "You again." I said, "Yes, sir." "Have you had your lunch?" I said, "No, sir." "Why aren't you eating lunch?" I then said, "You would never understand. Will you take this?" And he took it. The first time he refused to take anything not one man present would take anything, but that day seven or eight took tracts.

Each week I went to the same shed and offered a tract to the same man. Once we had a prolonged argument at the end of which one of the men said I had not convinced him. I replied, "There is no chance to convince him. His mind isn't open." Then one day he told me his story: as a young lad of fourteen he had heard the Gospel and accepted Christ. He was called to preach and he worked through to seminary where he was taught that the Bible was not written by the people he had thought; that there was no such place as hell; there was no such person as Satan. When he heard these things, he was completely turned off. He felt

that if there was a God why had He allowed this lie to persist. He turned his back on God. During our conversation he asked if there could be a second chance for a person like him and I reminded him of the story about the prodigal son.

A year later I received a phone call from the hospital informing me there was a dying man who wanted to talk to me. I recognized the description although I did not know his name. He was dying and the message he sent was, "Tell that big student I came home." Although I never knew his name, one day I shall because his name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

Let me say to you who are parents, believers in Christ: we should get into the telling business. Tell your children and tell everybody, any chance you get, that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save the lost and that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Chapter 5 Whatever You Ask

Do you realize that a believer in Christ is a co-worker with his Lord when he prays?

In John 14:13 we read these words, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." To believe in Jesus Christ is to believe in prayer. Promises about prayer are scattered all through the New Testament. In John 15:7 we read, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." When I was a young believer I faced the challenge of this promise about my loved ones. I realized as I prayed for them that I wanted them all to be saved. I wanted them all to be healthy. I wanted them to be untroubled. And I did not want any death. I even wondered whether it would make sense to ask that we all die at the same time, then there would be nobody to mourn.

When I listed these things it was as if the Lord spoke to me and said, "You want all of these things; I have all of that ready for them. What you want for them is heaven and that is what is ahead of them. Just a little while and they will be there." While preparing myself for the mission field, I was asking myself as I read and studied the Bible, do I really believe? Would God answer my prayers? At that time I was working my way through school by serving as a janitor. I went on duty six days a week at 5 o'clock in the evening. My fiancé was in nurses training and she was working all day and night at the hospital. We met at her home Saturday afternoons, the only time in the week we could be together. We usually ended my visit with devotions; we would read the Bible, have prayer and I would leave about 3:30 in the afternoon to get back to work at 5 o'clock.

My fiancé's brother, whose nickname was Butte, was not a believer and we had prayed for him for several years. At that time the evangelist, Bill Nicholson, was preaching at the church of the Open Door. He had been there for four weeks and Butte liked him. So each Sunday night the four of us would go to hear Nicholson preach. On the fourth Sunday Butte was offended by one of the people who urged him to go down to front in response to the invitation and who happened to use the word *coward*. This infuriated him. He had served for over four years in the Canadian Army, had been wounded twice in Flanders and the idea of being a coward just did not sit well with him. He refused to go back.

We were all troubled by this because we had thought that if anybody could lead Butte into faith it would be Bill Nicholson, who was now moving twenty miles further on the other side of the city to hold services. The Saturday after he had said he would never go again I was visiting my fiancé and we had our devotions as usual. While on our knees I thought about Butte and his unbelief. If we were going to hear

Nicholson, we would have to start an extra hour early to ride the trolley so while in prayer it came to me "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it." A period of silence followed and it lasted. I was talking to the Lord and here it was, "Ask and you shall receive." We had just read it. I pulled myself together, as it were, and asked the Lord that Butte would voluntarily get ready the next day, Sunday, an hour earlier than usual to ride the trolley to hear Nicholson and that while there he would accept Christ. I felt I was heard.

What else did I want? Well, I had my brother in Canada, in Manitoba; he was not a believer and I wanted him to be saved. And I asked for that. Then it came to me – when? There was no Gospel preaching where my brother lived. The nearest I knew of was in Winnipeg, eighty miles away, and I wondered what would be practical to ask. Finally I prayed, "before Christmas". This was in October. I was shocked at my boldness. There was no talk between us as we got up from our knees and I left for my work. The next day I went to dinner at the home of my fiancé's sister. Nobody talked about going to church. At 4 P.M. Butte spoke up and said, "Now if we are going to hear Nicholson tonight we will have to get ready early. He has moved way over on the other side of town." Not one of us said one word. Sure enough, he got ready and at five o'clock we set out. There were about 1,000 people present and Nicholson preached a good sermon. No one responded. That had never happened before; he would have a number of people to come forward. I was sitting on the end of the row by the aisle and Butte was sitting behind me with his wife; I was wondering what in the world would happen now. Nicholson stepped down from the pulpit and said, "There is someone here tonight with a friend. He should ask him. Eternity is long. Turn and ask him." I nearly fainted. It was so obvious. I turned and was going to ask him "do you want to?" and when I turned he said "Sure" and up the sawdust trail he went. He walked up there – this English-born Episcopalian in a blue serge suit, who got on his knees in the sawdust and prayed. I thought to myself while I was beside him that I ought to say something and when I leaned over to say something it was as though someone put his hand on my shoulder and shoved me away – keep out of this. He is to this day a believer.

Now let me tell you that a year later, while visiting with my brother on the farm I spoke to him. I said, "By the way, I discussed with you when here several years ago about the Gospel. Have you reached any conclusions about that?" And he said, "Why, haven't I told you? Last fall around Thanksgiving time two Salvation Army officers from Winnipeg couldn't have the hall they expected to preach in due to a mix-up. They learned they could have their services in our country church. I went to hear them. That man preached like you talk and when he asked who would come forward, I did. Didn't I tell you?" There it was. And I learned "whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it."

Chapter 6 In My Name

Do you realize what the phrase "in my name" actually means?

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it (John 14:13, 14).

Each believer must learn to understand the language of the Gospel. What we often do not realize is that the language of the Gospel is not the language of the street, nor is it the language of the unbeliever. This passage was spoken to His own disciples; this was not spoken to the whole wide world. It is not said to every man on the street "whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." It is for committed believers.

When you read "Whatsoever ye shall ask . . . that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," the Father will be glorified in the Son because the Son is in us. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father is working out His will. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," the Lord Jesus said. The believer has received the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior and if he has understood what he is doing, he has opened his heart to receive Him as Lord. God Almighty changes the individual by regenerating him: every man in Christ Jesus is a "new creation. Old things are passed away, behold all things have become new."

One of the new things is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit takes the things of the Lord Jesus Christ and shows them unto us so that the believer has functioning in him the Holy Spirit of God who brings to his attention the things that the Lord Jesus Christ would want to do. Thus when a believer in Christ prays he is consciously asking for what Christ in him wants.

I have a nephew who, with his wife, is dead set against the Gospel. They are almost bitter in their opposition. When I pray for them, every day as a regular routine, I cannot pray that my nephew and his wife will be saved as they are – I pray that they should be changed. That will happen through tribulation. Trouble will come to him.

Now we have several customs in our own way of doing things where a person can use as his own the name of another. And let me draw to your attention several situations in which you can use another person's name. We are thinking now of using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. A child takes the name of its father. You give the child the name of James and you will call him Jim. The believer stands before God, who sees the believer in Christ, and we have Christ as the one in whom we come to God just as that little boy is the one who has come in his father, as it were.

At one time when I was praying specifically for a definite answer and while meditating before Him about praying, it came to me "Why should I be heard?" and I realized I stand in Christ. It is Christ in me that would be the reason I would be heard, but that would apply if I were praying what Christ in me wants to be prayed. On that particular occasion it came to me, "What can you bring?" I had to answer quickly, "Nothing." "What have you ever done to warrant any answer to your prayers?" "Nothing." "Then why should I do this thing?" "Because Christ did; for His sake." The person who is born again can pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is another situation in which this can be done. When a person is a partner in a firm, the partner uses the firm's name as his own. If what I am doing is in His will and I am honestly seeking to serve the Lord, if I count that I belong to Him and He belongs to me, then I can pray because I will be praying in His name as a co-worker with Him. I am witnessing with Him to the whole wide world of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

There is another situation in which one person can use another person's name: the girl who marries uses the man's name. A peasant girl may be marrying a king but when she is married she becomes the queen and she inherits his kingdom. So it is in our relationship with the Lord. The name is Christ and as a person who belongs to Him and a member of His bride, I can use His name as my own. But of course as a member of the bride I have no life of my own. And when I am praying in His name, I am not praying my own ideas.

We often fall into the natural view about praying. We want something badly and so we pray about it and what we are asking Almighty God to do is to give us what we want. It is not surprising that so many of those prayers are never answered because the Almighty Father is committed to answering the praying of His Son. It is His Son looking up into the Father's face who could say, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." And so we would say, with reference to praying in His name, "whatsoever ye shall ask in my name", the person who can come to the Lord born again, the grace of God having opened his heart to where he has received the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God is showing him the things of Christ, and this person comes in that relationship and prays in that name – that person is praying aright.

Could it be that in some cases one would not know what to pray for? That is true. You need to seek what to pray for and for that reason, you will need to read the Bible. Read in the Gospels how the Lord Jesus responded to requests that were brought to Him. Or read in the Psalms where many expressions of prayer are written for us; there you will find that your heart will find praises and expressions that will suit the cry of your heart. To pray to God in His name means you belong to Him. Don't forget that. If you want something He wants for you, then you are to pray in His name. And if you belong to Him you can ask what you will because you will be wanting things that are pleasing to His sight.

Chapter 7

Go Ye Therefore

Do you realize that a dedicated believer may not always know what to do?

When I became a believer in Christ my greatest joy was very simple: I was not going to hell. Even to this day I can privately say "Hallelujah." I had heard the Lord say "Come" and I came. Some time later, in due course, I learned that I was to have fellowship with Him. "Abide in me." And still later I realized that in order to have fellowship with Him I would need to go. "Go into all the world." This culminated in my resigning from the law office to go and tell the Gospel. I assumed at that time this meant the mission field, overseas. Since I needed to be qualified, I went to the Bible Institute in Los Angeles. In due time I graduated June 19, 1924 and got married June 20. We went to Pomona, California, to live until we received an appointment to the mission field. Then we faced the great dilemma – where? I found myself studying Acts 16:6-8, a familiar passage and I would like to point out something:

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

These were the Apostle Paul and his company of missionaries. Have you ever wondered how they were forbidden? Do you think they heard a voice? Why not this – that when they were in prayer they had no liberty. They could not get any liberty to go into Asia Minor. That was not the place.

The answer would have to come as I prayed. So I set up a routine for myself: when I awakened in the morning the first thing I did was to go out into the woods that I might spend time in prayer and meditation. I would get out there sometimes as early as 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. And I would wait and pray and when it was light enough to read, I would read in the New Testament and I would meditate, trying to find out which way I should go. This was not for just an hour. This would be from the morning when I woke up before daylight until far into the morning and throughout the rest of the day I thought about it. This continued for several weeks.

After that I turned to the Lord, saying, "I have tried every field I know; I have tested every relationship I can think of. Now you tell me where you want me to go." I waited to see what He would show me. I could see myself talking to Americans and to Canadians and this was not what I wanted; this meant preaching and I could not do that as a layman. I wanted to talk to pagans about the Lord. By 8 o'clock that morning I was home and I said to my wife, "Looks like we are going to stay here." She said, "That's fine. They need it here." I then said, "That means I will have to go to college and then to seminary to be ordained." She said, "Good; maybe you can learn something."

So, that being the case, we folded our tents, so to speak and I went back to Canada and started teaching

school to earn money to go to college. While teaching school in Manitoba I was asked to be pastoral supply at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg. I later felt led to go to Dallas Theological College. We had no money and this would require financial help. Now all my life, up till that time, I had received – outside of my family – actual cash in the amount of 25 cents. If I was going to travel from Winnipeg to Los Angeles then over to Dallas, how would that be done?

About that time, while we were waiting for our second child to be born, I foresaw that I would be in debt. We had only \$30 in the bank. I prayed and prayed that the Lord would show me how I could manage without going in debt. The Scripture told me, "owe no man anything." There was no response until I despaired. Then one Sunday evening after the service the deacons brought an envelope to the manse. My wife and I opened it; we looked and there saw green. I reached my hand in and pulled out a hundred dollar bill – no, there were two of them. Amazing! It so happened we did not need them – the doctor at the birth of our second child would not take any money. So there we were with \$200 and \$30 in the bank. That was in September. In December I announced that I would leave the following June on my way to seminary. In January a friend gave me railroad fare, a check for \$400. Mind you, four months earlier I had received 25 cents. In February a man shook hands with me at the evening church service and left a bill in my hand. I stuck it in my pocket and when I reached home I showed it to my wife and saw it for the first time; it was a \$100 bill. In March, at a prayer meeting, the congregation surprisingly gave me a purse which, when I opened it, contained thirty five dollar gold pieces.

In less than four months I had received \$850. In September that year I enrolled at the Dallas Theological College and on the very day of enrollment I was hired as a Hebrew Instructor with all my expenses paid. This was the way in which the Lord was leading me into where I would be serving Him.

Chapter 8 **I am With You**

Can you see that the most important aspect of walking in obedience to the Lord is that the Lord will walk with the believer?

No doubt a major concern any person faces in undertaking to do the Lord's will is the thought of forsaking former companions, of turning away from cherished goals, of confronting such as oppose the Gospel. It is easy to overlook the fact that there will be new associations, new companions. In other words, walking with the Lord will not be as lonely as we think. In Matthew 19:29 we read:

And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

An obedient believer who undertakes to walk with the Lord will have fellowship with the Lord. We read this in Matthew 28:19:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Certain gracious things happen when the believer obeys, but the greatest thing that can happen is the Lord will be with him. As a matter of fact, the Lord will be in him. It is not only true that the believer will have joy in fellowship, he will also be strengthened to endure.

All of this was demonstrated in what happened to me in my personal experience after I felt called to preach. As previously stated, I began preaching in St. John's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg as pastoral supply. I had not yet been to seminary and was not ordained but I was filling the pulpit under authority of the session. In traveling from Winnipeg to Los Angeles where my family would stay while I was at the seminary, and then on to Dallas, where the seminary was located; then to start a course of study for three years, I arrived with \$50 in my pocket. This presented a challenge to faith. I had the feeling in my heart that if my preaching were to amount to anything real it would be based on the conviction that God can affect the local practical situation and here was a case in point. If He could not take care of me on this trip and if He could not open the way before me, what would I have to preach about?

When I heard from Mrs. Gutzke, we decided to join the Southern Presbyterian Church. This was on Thursday and I waited for a phone call to preach on Sunday. I was ready, having preached in Canada. When no one had called by Saturday night I passed through a period of deep spiritual concern. I was challenged with the thought that God might never open a door for me. Maybe I thought I was doing something big because I was going to serve Him and He was giving me to understand that He could get along without me. I longed to preach. While feeling forsaken and walking along a gloomy section of the city it suddenly came to me that if I was going to preach in the Presbyterian Church I should join it. So the next day I did and on Monday a phone call came through from Westminster Presbyterian Church – the first phone call I received in Texas and I had been there since September. This was January.

They asked me to preach the next Sunday morning which I did. The next Sunday arrangements had already been made for preaching, then for the next eight and a half years that was where I preached.

When I think about it and look back over the whole situation I have to realize I would have quit. I had no more hope or expectation. But He carried me through. And when the Lord says, "Lo, I am with you" that means in trouble, in the dark and in the emptiness. In spite of my good intentions and total commitment to the Lord, I would have quit as a matter of good common sense, but He carried me through.

Chapter 9

Set Your Affection

Can you understand why a believer in Christ may find it very hard to obey the Lord?

When a soul accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, he becomes a new creation, a new creature. The Bible speaks of his being born again. Before that he was the child of his father and mother but now, in this new birth, he is a child of God. He is given the Holy Spirit to guide him; to show him the truth, to comfort him. Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." So there are actually two natures in the believer, the old man centered in his flesh -carnal, selfish, and the new man centered in the Lord – spiritual, yielded.

As the believer lives in the world he mingles with other people on a human level according to all the activities of the old man. The new spiritual nature in him prompts him to live righteously – being reverent, respectful, considerate, charitable. Daily he faces the issue of acting in the flesh as a human being as led inwardly by the Holy Spirit though he is living among men. Usually his godly manner of life wins approval. The Scripture speaks of the disciples having favor with all the people. Sometimes his friends and associates want him to share in activities of their own which would compromise him and which he does not feel are proper. The public does not direct its affairs to please God, and if you share in those affairs you will sometimes be involved in things that are not necessarily pleasing to God. And they invite the believer

to join. After all, these Christians live in the community and they are invited to take part. Peter says about this, "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. "

This can become a serious problem. It did with me in my early experience. At the time I was a candidate to go to the mission fields, teaching school in northern Manitoba. I was engaged at the time to a missionary volunteer and was waiting until I had money enough to go to the Bible Institute. I enjoyed playing baseball and I qualified to play second base on a senior community team. We belonged to a league of about eight teams from eight different areas of the country. We were a country group and we would be going into various towns on a Tuesday or Friday night to play a game of league ball. It was customary for the particular group that I belonged to in my district to finance the program by proceeds from an annual baseball dance. It was a big affair with various entertainment features, then a box social followed by a dance. I had reached the conclusion in my personal life that I would not take part in the dancing so I did not attend this. You will remember that in this community I was the only young person who publicly confessed that I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. Also, I was a candidate for the mission field. I had felt that among other things I wanted to conduct myself in such a way that the testimony would speak for the Lord.

About a week or ten days before the opening of the season I was confronted with a problem: I was the young school teacher in the community. I would not attend the dance yet I was about to put on a uniform that was bought and paid for by the proceeds of that dance. In the days when I was an agnostic I would have thought that was obvious evidence of a hypocrite. How could I maintain my personal testimony in the community?

The game was scheduled for Friday night. About a week before the opening game I confided in my manager that I was troubled, explaining why. He argued that everyone would understand my right to refrain from dancing if I wanted to and no one would object if I played in the team uniform. I spent two sleepless nights and about 3 A. M. on Thursday the day before the game, I read this in the third chapter of Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." I knew right well that baseball was not above. "Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." That would not have anything to do with baseball. "Set your affection on things above. " Then I had my finger on the real problem. My heart was in baseball. I was the captain of the team, the clean-up man and I loved to hit the long ball. Everybody said it would be all right for me to play but deep down in my heart I did not feel that I should. That verse cleared the air for me and suddenly the darkness was gone – the burden was lifted. I phoned the manager: I definitely was not going to play. I did not attend the game but spent the time rejoicing in things above.

By the way, would you like to know how I solved the dilemma. I found out what a uniform would cost and I paid that money to the ball club, wore the uniform and enjoyed playing for the rest of the season. But it was always clear to this day in my mind that Christ comes first, baseball comes second.

Chapter 10

I Will Bless Thee

Can you understand how walking with the Lord may involve giving up precious treasures?

The Gospel calls the human soul into the salvation which God provides by giving Himself for me; as a ransom Christ Jesus has redeemed me to be His own. I do not simply become His servant; I become

a member of His body. I am an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ. That relationship has been variously indicated in the Bible. Abraham was called the friend of God. The more common relationship is referred to as Father and Son: God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Sometimes that relationship is referred to as a bride and bridegroom. Let us say right now it is not a natural relationship. This is a spiritual relationship that exists between those who have been born again and their living Lord, and Paul describes it as a relationship this way: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." For that relationship to be effectual and operational it must be warm, personal and intimate.

Abraham is the pioneer of living by faith. His life was marked by the principle of separation; his career was featured by one crisis after another, which was resolved by separation. He was called to come out of his country Ur of the Chaldees and he was separated from it. He went through the experience of being separated from his nephew, Lot and later from his son Ishmael, the son of Hagar, whom Abraham took as his second wife.

Finally he was threatened with separation from his cherished son, Isaac – the son of promise. Each step was closer, more personal and more precious. When Abraham prepared to offer up Isaac we read how God said certain things that are very important in Genesis 22:16-18:

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

This is the classic pattern – giving up the most precious to receive the blessing of God. Again and again in Scripture this pattern is repeated. There is a striking example of this seen in Moses. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, verses 24-26, we read that Moses would not be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter but chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. That was a great decision on the part of Moses when he chose to be with the people of God rather than to have all the benefits that would come to him if he had been considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Jesus of Nazareth assured His disciples that such renunciation of the good things, the previous things, would not be forgotten by God. When Peter asked Him, "We have forsaken all, what do we have?" The Lord Jesus said that anybody who had forsaken anything that he had for God and the Gospel would receive a hundred fold.

Generally speaking, the instances of cherished possessions being taken away are pictured in the pruning of the vine under the Father's supervision. "I am the vine, you are the branches." And we know that the branches bear the fruit but the gardener prunes the branches. Seldom is it the case that the believer sees the need, but God does and the believer accepts it. In my experience this occurred at the time when I was preparing to go into fulltime service for the Lord. While I was teaching school in Manitoba, my fiancé was teaching school in British Columbia. We expected to be married in about two and one half years. She had become very dear to me and we were greatly blessed as we wrote to each other almost every day.

I realized that going into a foreign, pagan country to minister the Gospel could be dangerous. It would almost certainly entail hardship. Then the idea developed that perhaps she could not go or that she would not go with me and this was an impossible prospect. Would I go to Africa without her? I did not want to face this issue; I spent hours in prayer. I did not seem to have the strength to say I would go without her. I began to see that it was a direct challenge I had to face. I could not share this even with her and I could not avoid the issue. Finally I came to a decision – perhaps not with the best reasons, but they were the only reasons that came to me. I realized that I did not even know I would live that long; I did not even know she would live that long. Still I had to face it.

Realizing that my life depended upon Him and then realizing that He had died for me and when I would go to the heart of Africa He would be there, I finally said, "All right, Lord; I will go even if I have to go alone." Suddenly the assurance came, "You won't have to go alone." At once it came to me,

"Because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee."

I knew then that the Lord would be with me all the way. This is one of those things that happened to me as I was learning through actual experience to trust in faith in the Lord. This was what it meant to have Christ living in me.

Chapter 11

Many Adversaries

Do you realize there is active opposition in the spiritual world to the Gospel?

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." These words are found in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 16, verse 9. Satan has always opposed the Gospel. He does today. Jesus of Nazareth warned His disciples there would be people seeking to kill them, thinking they were doing God a service. It is a matter of record that the most deadly enemies which eventually succeeded in bringing Him to the cross of Calvary, contending against Jesus of Nazareth, were the Pharisees. These were good church-going people. They attended the Temple to worship and they were praying people – they prayed to God three times a day. They were tithing – they gave to God one tenth of their income. One would have to say they were good people. The early church found that these people were their constant critics; but Jesus of Nazareth found they were His deadly enemies. And the most bitter opposition the early disciples had came from Temple leaders – the high priest and his associates.

This was a fact of life that I had to learn the hard way. I was a grown man before I came to faith in Jesus Christ and committed myself to serve. As previously mentioned, I expected to go to the mission field where I would have confronted pagan people. I could have expected opposition there because I would have presented something different from their beliefs. When, to my surprise, I felt called to minister the Gospel in North American, I made myself available to conduct church services. Within a few months I was called to serve as supply pastor in a city church. I applied to be received in the denomination to which that church belonged as a candidate for the ministry. And so it happened that I was to be publicly examined and received by the church authorities. My preaching had already attracted attention; my regular Sunday congregation was usually as large as the membership of the church. I went to this official meeting with the expectation of being received with some appreciation, perhaps even congratulations. The meeting was held in a small town about forty miles distant and after spending the morning in university classes I arrived about two thirty. The meeting had been in progress since early morning. I came into the church and sat in the rear while the proceedings continued and as I listened I heard of a scheming, conniving character who was seeking to be accepted into the church for his own selfish ends.

This was my first experience to hear official debate but I would get the drift of the matter and I frankly wondered why such a man would seek to even join the church. As the debate went on without naming this undesirable person who was aiming to advance himself by means of joining the church, I suddenly realized they were describing me. I was shocked! I was about to get to my feet and assure the brethren I would be glad to leave if I was unwelcome but I felt the Lord in me and He said, clearly, "If you are working for me, you must take this." I felt as though he had His hand on my shoulder but I said, "It is not true; they are lying about me." He said to me, "You should have been with me in Jerusalem; they beat me and condemned me on false charges. They finally killed me. They will not do that to you here. Sit right there and take it."

That debate lasted for three hours. They disregarded all parliamentary procedures. They voted on the matter during that time and a group of elders voted to admit me; all the ministers but one voted against my coming in but there were more elders than ministers and each time they voted the opponents of my coming into the fellowship of the church were defeated. That should have ended the matter but they went right on and voted again. They finally adjourned to meet the next week in another church. I had never been so slandered in my life. Not one comment was made to show the record of my ministry. No reference was made regarding the increase in church attendance and the surplus in finances each month. Just false insinuations. That hurt me deeply.

You may wonder what the nature of the opposition was grounded on; it was something like this: I had not been to seminary and was not an ordained man. I was a person looking forward to going to seminary and was a student. The church I was preaching in was the second largest of that particular denomination in the city. A number of the ministers who were debating whether or not to admit me actually coveted that position. They accused me of seeking to advance my own fortune by taking advantage of an unsuspecting congregation. It was simply a matter of jealousy.

I had three sleepless nights after that. My heart was hurt. These were ministers in the church; it was something I had to learn. But I knew for sure the Lord had stood by me throughout the ordeal. A week later they met in another church; I was there and they started where they had left off. I got up, thinking I just did not have to listen further. I had turned to walk out when an elder jumped up in front of me – an older man – and said, "Brother, you can't go. You stay right here." I said, "What they are saying is not true. They are lying." He then said, "We fought this thing through a week ago for three hours and we are still there. If you go now we will lose everything we have been standing for. You stay right here."

I sat down and took it for another hour and a half. They finally agreed that I be allowed to come into the fellowship of the service in that church. That is my background of experience. But one thing I learned all the way through: even though I ran out of patience and fortitude, I was exhausted and defeated, the Lord held me right there. Then, through that old elder, turned me around and made me go right back there and take it and gave me to understand that if I was going to serve Him I would have to take it.

As Paul wrote so many years ago, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

Chapter 12

Beware Lest Any Man Spoil

Are you aware of the danger when men explain personal experience by analyzing and describing natural processes?

Living in this world is dangerous. There are many things unknown to us. In living we are involved with people and that makes us dependent upon others. Not everything that happens is helpful and not everybody is helpful. In learning anything we depend on others and some are not dependable. This can be very real in spiritual matters. New converts are always in danger for they are like children. They are in danger of losing what they have because they can be misled. A prodigal can waste everything he has; by the same token, a person can grow up accustomed to attending church and after he leaves home get into a habit of not going to church.

Paul had this in mind when he wrote to the Christians at Colossae. In chapter 2, verse 8 Paul writes these words, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of

men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Now this word spoil needs to be looked at. It does not mean that you are to deteriorate personally; it is a military term. We commonly speak of the spoils of war and when we say "lest any man spoil you" the word rob could be used. It is a case of despoil, taking what you have and this is what Paul is warning against.

What is the actual truth about philosophy that is so dangerous? Philosophy is the practice of explaining things and any time anyone starts explaining, you should be on guard because things happen in ways you cannot always trace, and when anyone starts to explain and sound learned, who puts two and two together to make four then adds two to make six, you can afford to turn away. He does not know that much because what happens day in and day out is oftentimes unexplainable; especially as Paul goes on to say, "Lest any man rob you through explanations and vain deceits after the tradition of men."

What would be the tradition of men? When someone starts any part of his comment or argument with, "everybody knows," stop him right there. You are one of the everybodies and you can say, "wait a minute, I don't know." Speak up or they will come in a sophisticated way and say, "Scholars say" – well, let the scholars keep it. If they know so much they should do something. Years ago when someone said, "Scholars say this and that" it occurred to me to wonder how many souls the scholars ever won from paganism into faith in the Lord.

Just because a man has spent his life in school or reading what other men have written does not mean he knows any more about the truth. If they are so smart why aren't they doing something about it? The next phrase reads, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world." Many people do not know what the word rudiments means. It means elements. Such as what? I John 2:16 speaks of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These are of the world -appetite, imagination, vanity. You can be sure that the person who talks with those reasons is not reliable; this is especially dangerous in higher education.

When I became a believer in Jesus Christ I rested my confidence in the God of the Bible. I realized that the revelation of God for me was in the Scriptures. About that time it was popular for learned men to study the biblical text and to theorize about how they came to be written. There were various types of criticism – higher criticism and lower criticism. Higher criticism was in vogue at that time. They discussed how the Bible was written and came to the conclusion that it is not reliable. One line of argument is along the line of man being imperfect and men wrote the Bible, therefore the Bible is imperfect and unreliable. That could have weight if one does not keep in mind that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

I remember one notorious minister who became known because he openly admitted from his pulpit that he did not hold the Bible as true. He professed faith in God, he spoke glowingly of Christ, but he did not believe the Scriptures. I bought his book and after reading half of it I felt shaken. I did not see how it would be possible to refute his arguments even though I did not believe them. They were impressive. I recognized his negative thrust all the way through, destroying confidence in the Bible. I read on to see what he had to say after he had the Bible out of the way and when I read the last chapters my heart was at rest: his effort to put forward anything constructive was very weak. He was strong in tearing down but weak in building.

I once had a professor who ridiculed the story of the burning bush, calling it a parable. He claimed Moses was deceiving the people when he told the story; that he, in other words, was a liar. I came across that kind of thing many times. One professor even asked how I could believe the Bible when it was so disorganized. I pointed out that our very lives are disorganized from day to day. We should keep in mind one thing: we should be very careful, "beware lest any man spoil you," rob you of your faith. They can do it through "philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men telling you what men say, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. "

Chapter 13

The Lord Stood With Me

Do you realize that the living Lord Jesus Christ will stand with the believer in the day of trouble?

It is a blessed fact that any believer who witnesses for Christ can count on His presence. We know that He will be with missionaries for He told them, "Lo, I am with you always." And at times when the believer is in trouble. We remember Paul as a prisoner in the storm at sea, when he could say, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul." Believers commonly take courage when they remember the word in Hebrews 13:5, 6, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is My Helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

I had occasion to learn this great truth in a very special situation. A number of years ago one of my children was involved in a situation that threatened disaster and I greatly sympathize with a parent who is looking upon a child in trouble. There is little parents can do but pray. The problem was not solved immediately. My wife and I kept this matter before the Lord in prayer for days. I was engaged to preach for several months in a church in Baton Rouge. I had prayed for a solution of the problem but I had no response so I went with the burden on my heart. It weighed down more and more heavily. I tried to find peace by committing the matter to the Lord in prayer; I tried to remember what I had advised other people to do when they had burdens. I remembered Psalm 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." I tried to consider all the possibilities, to accept every alternative and any disposition of the problem. But in only a little while after praying the burden was again on my heart. It became a spiritual issue. I knew the procedure to follow. I would counsel anyone in this situation to give up, give it over, and I tried it but nothing helped.

I became uneasy about my own relationship with the Lord. How could I preach? What could I preach? Did this reveal how ineffectual praying was in a practical situation? Didn't it make a difference when you prayed or was it my praying that was so inept and was it I who was at fault? I still had no peace. In spite of my efforts to yield the whole problem and my willingness to accept the solution, whatever it was, I was increasingly burdened. It looked as though my praying was of no avail. I openly and freely admitted before God that I was a sinner. He knew it anyway but I let Him know I knew it, too.

Then I remembered that Christ Jesus died for me and I put my trust in Him. I came to Him as one in Christ Jesus but when I would get up off my knees, the burden hung on me. I was to be notified by mail of the solution; the letter should reach me either by Saturday or by Monday. But it did not come Saturday and I worried all through that night and all through Sunday. I wanted to have peace. I remembered how Jesus of Nazareth said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." And how Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Oh, how I longed for that peace.

I knew the decision had been made before the letter was written and on Monday morning I went to the postoffice box and there was my letter. But I did not want to take it out: I wanted the victory first. I walked up and down in the foyer, struggling to find rest and peace – trust in God. I knew enough about the truth to know that my peace would not depend upon any consequence; it would depend upon Him. When I was beginning to feel frantic, I suddenly felt His presence – as real as if a man had laid his arm across my shoulder. Then He told me, "Whatever is in that letter, I will stand by you; you will not have to take it alone. In my heart it was if I had come out of darkness into daylight. I rejoiced. It made no difference what was in that letter: the Lord was with me.

Right then He prepared me for the time when I will walk with Him through the valley of the shadow

of death. What is the worst thing that can confront you? "I will be with you: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That is the important thing. Not that we always get what we ask or want but that we have Him.

The fact that when I opened the box and took out the letter and read it – and it was good – was an anti-climax. That was fine and I gave thanks to God for it, but the main thing from that whole experience was that from that day to this, when Christ liveth in you, in your darkest hour he will be there. He will never leave you nor forsake you. And when you have His presence, you can go through anything.

Chapter 14

Better Than Life

Can you believe that for a believer in Christ there are things more blessed than life itself?

Most problems a person deals with are involved in making a living and enjoying life. Sickness, injury, even death are the unexpected. We are quite unprepared for those events. We know they come; we know everyone else experiences them; we just do not ever think it will happen to us. It is common to live today as if there were no tomorrow. For the believer in Christ another outlook develops. We who believe in Him are encouraged to take the upward look into the heavenlies. But even here we need to grow. Our first outlook into the heavenlies is beyond the grave and we think about being saved, we think about going to heaven after we are through here. Then, as we grow in our understanding, we become aware of the present fellowship with God. We can say so surely, "Thou God seest me." And we are conscious of the fact that we are under God's hand. Finally we arrive at the realization that even now we can rejoice in the eternal aspects of our relationship with God. With Him it is forever but that forever includes now.

I learned this aspect of Christ liveth in me in a very personal way. My wife and I had four children, right together. Twelve years later my wife gave birth to a little baby boy; we called him our second crop. He was the darling of our family. My wife and I felt we were grandparents. The four children – two of them were in high school – took care of the baby. At that time I was a professor living on the campus of the seminary and he was the darling of the campus – the only baby on campus.

At seventeen months this baby was stricken with leukemia. We took him to the doctor to see if we could understand something about his pale complexion and the doctor checked him and immediately took the baby to the hospital. All that afternoon there were tests and that night the doctor told us soberly that the baby would live for perhaps three or four days. Utterly unbelievable. The child had never had a day of sickness of any sort. He was wonderfully well. And that night the doctor told me that our baby would live about three or four days.

I then had the task of telling four high school youngsters that their little brother Peter would die in a few days. We wept and we prayed. Later I went into the front room to my knees and I asked in prayer to Almighty God, "Do you want me to pray that this child shall live?" While I had never had vivid experiences along this line I do believe that God can heal and that people can be healed by God working on them directly, without medicine. I think it can happen. He asked me, "How long do you want him to live?" I had not thought of that and I said, "I don't know. But do you want me to ask for his life now?" He then asked me "Will you take care of him?" "Oh, I can't take care of him." Then I felt Him saying to me, "I have him now, He is in my arms. Do you want to take him out of my arms?" I said, "No, No" and right then I knew that the little boy Peter would die.

I went back to the hospital, met my wife there and told her about my strange experience in prayer. She

replied, "You found out Peter would not live. I found that out while you were gone." The next day we took him home to sleep in his own crib. On Sunday many kind friends came to share in our situation. The baby was spending most of his time sleeping; we were so thankful he was not hurting.

A former student came and said, "I don't have any words to say but I would like to read the Word of God to you." And as he read Psalm 63 he came to this word, "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." My wife spoke up and said, "Wait, wait. Read that again." So he did and she said, "That's strange. Our nurse was telling me about that this morning – how that particular verse was the epitaph on the gravestone of a son of a friend of ours. Suddenly it was just like glory in the room; the whole situation was entirely changed.

"Thy loving-kindness is better than life." Far better to have the loving-kindness of God than to live. Far better that our little boy have the loving-kindness of God – God caring for him, than to live in this world.

For our whole family – and it continues to this day – that is Peter Daniel's verse. There came a day when we dedicated a pew in the seminary chapel to Peter Daniel and we had the inscription put on the plaque, "Peter Daniel's verse, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.'" We sent that verse out by way of announcement because our students were away for the summer and they did not know about the short illness of this little chap. Several seminary students came to tell us that when the verse came to them their hearts were changed. One young man said, "Doctor, I came to the seminary here because I wanted to do something for God. I hope this was the thing to do. I did not feel right because I did not feel committed to God but when I read that verse my heart was changed. I can say I was converted when I read that verse."

When I think about it now I realize I knew all the time His loving-kindness is better than life but when these verses in the Bible are actually real in our experience and we apply them there, this is what we have in mind when we say, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He leads us to move into the promises of God and God blesses us with Himself.

Chapter 15

Do you realize that a dedicated, competent servant of God can become very tired?

It is not unusual to feel that a good man or woman would never tire of doing good because it would be natural to them. But it is an actual fact that a person doing the right thing can become tired and it is almost impossible for a tired person to be good or to do good. Oftentimes it would help lithe members of the family would remember that the different persons in the family can be tired – honestly, earnestly tired.

The whole matter of serving the Lord according to His will is something that needs to be learned. It does not come naturally to anybody, even to the believer. That body of his – that human nature of his – will drag his heels. There is one essential principle that we need to keep in mind and there is hope in this: the servant of God does not work alone. Not only is it true that the Lord is with him, but others are with him. Remember how the Lord said, "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them."

It is the most natural thing for anybody to feel that everything that is involved depends on him. No doubt some act that way so much they discourage volunteer help. But, with reference to working, it is better to put ten men to work than to do the work of ten men. I learned this while I was a pastor of a church during the depression.

We had let our youth worker go and I took over the supervision of the youth work. We had even let our office secretary go and I took over all the office work in a church right at 500 people. After months of extra work I felt myself being defeated – that was the way I felt. I did not want to give up so I began a study of Old Testament history to see how God's servants had functioned when they were under His guidance and perhaps in distress. I made a special study of Moses leading the Hebrews. I came to Exodus 17 and there learned much, beginning at verse 8:

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand (you will recognize that as a gesture of prayer) So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand (that would be in prayer) that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

In that remarkable story, when Moses went up on the mount to pray that turned the tide of battle. While he held up his hands in praying, Joshua could prevail. That sounded easy but the battle went on all day long and Moses' arms grew heavy with weariness and he quit. However, Aaron and Hur were there and they rolled up a stone for Moses to sit on when they took his hands and Aaron held up one hand while Hur held up the other hand. This meant Moses continued to pray and Joshua won a notable victory.

Here is something I want us to notice: united, intercessory prayer is the secret. Let me re-iterate that: united intercessory prayer, praying for someone else, is the secret. At the time I was the pastor, when I came across that story I suddenly realized that I was exhausted. That is why I had to quit. At a meeting of the men I told them what I needed as pastor was several men who did not count among the top rank men. I did not want the Sunday School teachers, elders or deacons, just several men to come and join me in praying. I set a time: 6:30 Monday morning in my office.

We started a men's prayer meeting then and kept it up for the rest of the time I was in that church, about seven years. Believers in Christ should all remember this and try to encourage other people to join us in prayer. Let's pray that as the Word of God is explained and taught the hearts of people will be open and they will be inclined to believe.

Chapter 16

I Will Forgive

Do you realize there is no sin so great that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash away?

We want to think now about something God does that is very remarkable. Sin is the big problem in the human experience and sin can be understood very simply. It is that part about human beings that is not like God. It will be helpful for us to have in mind that sin centers on self. Sin separates the soul from God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The fate of the soul is directly related to the attitude toward sin. Proverbs 28:13 reads: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." I tremble when I think of the foolishness of some who think they understand the Gospel to allow them to sin and they expect blessing. There is a sober warning in Hebrews 10:26-29:

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

God does forgive sin. There is a procedure to follow and this is for everybody: repent, confess, forsake, believe. To repent is to believe the Gospel and then, looking into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, to confess that one's personal conduct is not good, and to turn one's back upon it. Sometimes it is hard for a soul to believe that God will forgive. This is especially true for the person who has become sensitive to his wrongdoing and he cannot see how God will forgive. This is because he is a human being and does not understand the nature of God.

All of this was brought to my mind vividly some years ago. I received a long distance phone call from a lady whom I had never seen. Some time before that she had written and asked me whether my taped messages could be profitably heard by a blind person or was a blackboard needed to illustrate what I was saying. Upon my assurance that the taped messages were presented in a conversational way she ordered 25 of them and later she ordered another 25. She now asked if I could do her a favor: her cousin's husband had terminal cancer; his life expectancy was six months. He had been an alcoholic for over thirty years and he felt that drinking alcohol in this fashion had been sin and now he was afraid to die. So this lady asked if she sent the plane ticket would I come to their city to interview this man.

While I was thinking about it she mentioned there were conditions: the man would see me for twenty minutes and if at the end of twenty minutes he became tired that would be the end of the interview and unless he asked, I would not have another chance to talk to him.

As I listened, I felt inadequate to talk to a person past sixty years of age who felt he had been doing something wrong for over thirty years. How could I tell him about the Gospel in twenty minutes? When I pointed out that twenty minutes would not allow us to become acquainted, she said I would not have to get acquainted, that I could start right in telling him about the Lord.

By that time, I knew I had to go. Even if I did not know what to say, I was one who represented the Gospel. So I agreed and in due time I went. I arrived in that city about 6 o'clock in the evening and was taken immediately to see this man who was bedridden. He was in a bad state. After five minutes of conversation I knew we could talk indefinitely. At 8 o'clock I rose to leave but he said, "You are not finished." When I promised to return the next day he was satisfied. At the end of our conversation the next night he asked me to return the next day and when I arrived he had arranged for a number of friends and relatives to come, so we repaired to the home of a relative. After all were seated the man said, "Now tell them about grace;"

After about an hour and half, it developed that I was on the radio and one of those present raised the question, "Can that radio material be put on any station?" So it was arranged and the next week I started on the local radio station. That was in December; in March the sick man told her he was sorry she had spent all the money for the radio inasmuch as it was too late for him. This man wrote to me and my wife and asked that we pray. The doctor had warned this sick man that if he stopped the use of alcohol the cancer would probably work faster in his body and he would die sooner but he felt it was wrong and refused to do so. In May he announced to the doctor and to his family, "I know now that God is my Father, heaven is my home and that is where I am going. I know that drinking is sin and when I go home, I am going to be sober. I will never take another drink."

He stopped drinking and he was cured of his cancer, got up out of bed and back to his business. He counted it a miracle. I did, too. Through this experience I learned in a new way what God means when He says, "For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

Chapter 17

Fruit of the Spirit

Do you know that even if a person believes in Christ and witnesses for Him to others, that person might still have some doubts?

It seems natural to think that if a person has once accepted Christ and has told the world that he is a believer, he will be blessed and strong in faith forever. No doubt many a soul has been deeply troubled because of doubt and uncertainty. The fact that there is question in the heart arouses the fear that one is not really a believer after all. It is easy to mistake my own feelings as the source of any power so that when I feel weak or confused I am distressed to think that I do not really belong to the Lord. Then I am inclined to think my former confidence was an error. All such feelings are aroused and strengthened by the fact that it is natural for people generally to question the validity of any profession of faith. It is common for outsiders to suspect that the testimony of believers is at best an exaggeration. When a believer begins to doubt, everybody joins him and pushes him into deeper darkness.

All of this became increasingly clear after I had been pastor for several years. I was pastor of this particular church during the days of the depression. As previously mentioned, our officers had let the youth worker go to save expenses so I undertook that responsibility; then we let the church secretary go and I took that work over. Meanwhile, I had been attending the university, taking a larger than normal load of work in order to graduate that year. I had been under strain for a long time. Thus on Tuesday forenoon I worked on my next Sunday morning sermon.

I was at the time preaching a series of messages on the fruit of the Spirit. I was in the front room of the manse and my wife was in the kitchen. When she called to ask what I was doing I replied that I was working on my Sunday morning sermon. After awhile she asked what I was preaching about and when I said, "Peace" her answer was, "Haven't got it, have you?" That opened the door. The truth was I did not have peace. What bothered me was I did not know enough about the Bible to know that peace is the fruit of the Spirit. I knew about fruit: you do not work to produce fruit – the fruit grows. You receive the fruit when you cultivate.

Quickly I realized that although I had preached on joy the Sunday before, I really did not have joy. The Sunday before that I had preached on love and I did not have any love. When I thought it all over I could not say that I even loved the Bible. It was a book to study, to read and to preach on. I could not claim that I really loved the people, I sometimes thought that if I never saw them again that would be too soon. I could not even say I really loved God. He was Someone I needed, I feared and I hoped that He would be gracious to me; but He was far off. The more I thought about it the deeper my heart sank; I realized I did not have what I was preaching about. Should I preach it?

That was on Tuesday morning. I cancelled all Tuesday afternoon engagements and did not return to the office. I stayed in prayer and study and was with the family but preoccupied with my problem. On Wednesday I still did not go to the office. With increasing panic in my soul I was being moved to doubt. Doubt that I was truly a believer because if I were, there should be fruit. Wednesday night I went to prayer meeting but I certainly did not preach on the fruit of the Spirit or anything like that. I felt like a hypocrite.

Again, Thursday I did not go to the office. I simply stayed at home, reading all day long, taking time for prayer, meditation, wondering if anything had gone wrong. I had it figured out and I was only talking about what I had figured out; I did not really have what I was talking about. Thursday, long into the night, there was the gathering darkness of despair. By Friday I still did not go to the office and answered no phone calls. I knew I would have to resign as pastor and that was my whole life. I said to myself I had been honest as a skeptic and I was not going to be a liar now.

Toward Friday evening my major question was which elder I would choose to talk to; which one would I tell I would have to quit? And Saturday morning, when the time had come to call the man, I spent some

time asking myself how this could have happened to a person who had had my experience of conversion. I kept praying to the Lord to show me if there was anything to see and it dawned on me: I was looking to myself to love God; I was expecting myself to turn to God and I knew the Scriptures – that being carnal minded is enmity against God. In Romans it is as plain as day. And then, I had been reading in I John, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:10)

Wonderful! And later on in that same chapter, verse 19, "We love him, because he first loved us." Gradually I could see what was the matter: I was expecting myself to turn to God and to serve God, and I did not have it in me. I thought about how it was in Canada where I had grown up. In the wintertime the ground is frozen, sometimes as much as two or three feet deep. Is something injected into it to make it freeze? No. The reason it freezes is because it is left to itself. The sun is further away and it is just that cold. I knew enough about it to know that were it not for the sun that ground would be frozen as solid as a rock. There would be no vegetables, no flowers; there would be nothing.

Then why did plants grow and what causes the seed to germinate? It is when the sun shines on the garden – that is when the garden gets warm. Then I could see it: the earth can never germinate the flowers and the vegetables alone; the sun must warm the ground. And I saw that in my natural self is enmity against God but if I would bring my heart to Calvary, if I would gaze upon what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for me and if I would continue to gaze upon Him, I would be filled With love and joy and peace.

And so, I learned that Christ does it. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And if at any time you have any doubt in yourself when you think about these things and you say, "I just don't have it in me" (true) and "I just never could do that" (right). But that does not mean it cannot be done. Christ in you can do it. By all means come to Him and trust in Him. He can work in you "to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Chapter 18 **Filled With the Spirit**

Do you understand how a person can accept the Gospel and still be without the Lord?

James wrote, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." That is an interesting phrase, "deceiving your own selves" – as much as saying you do not deceive anybody else. They can tell by looking at you. "By their fruit you shall know them." And if a person does not really respond to the Lord and live in His will, it will be obvious to people who are watching. But the serious thing is that the individual believer can fool himself. Jesus of Nazareth said about the scribes and the pharisees, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

Isn't that an indictment for us to be concerned about? That is possible. Because the Gospel is communicated by words, this is the area where the basic errors arise. Telling the Gospel can be primarily in words but Paul wrote to the Thessalonians like this:

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (I Thessalonians 1:5).

It came in words, surely – but not in word only. Because the Gospel is presented in a number of historical facts there is something to hear and to know and to accept as true. Anybody can hear it when the preacher tells the story. Anybody can know what the story of Jesus of Nazareth is and believe it is true.

And this sets up the situation in which the first big error occurs: because I know these facts and believe them to be true, I can be tricked into thinking I have it. But wait – I may know the name of the medicine and I may even buy the medicine and put it in my medicine chest and still not be helped, as you well know. I have to take some, put it in my mouth and swallow it down my throat. Only in that way can the medicine help me.

I had the opportunity of seeing this truth demonstrated in one of my own family. My second son, whose name is John, has his Master of Electrical Engineering degree from Georgia Tech. In his thirties he became burdened with the lack of blessing in his life. He spent long vacations in Mexico, meditating. I asked him one time what he was doing and he said, "I am resting and thinking." I had not thought that boy ever did any thinking but I was wrong; he was thinking. Afterwards I learned what it was he was trying to figure out. He believed what his father preached and he believed what his mother believed. He believed the Bible and he believed all the things spoken of in it. Why did he not feel that he had inwardly been changed?

On a trip home on vacation he asked me some questions. "Dad, don't we say that all power belongs to God?" I said, "Yes sir." "The power that makes a rose bloom or a bird fly?" "Yes sir." "You mean that is the power that created me and I am just the way God made me?" When he asked if that power is not operating today or has it stopped, I could tell him "No." In II Corinthians 5:17 we read that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new."

This is what we preach. And I told him, "You can be regenerated; you can be changed." He simply said, "I was just wondering." At another time he asked more about the present application of this power of God. Is it operative now? Our conversation brought out the potential power that will be operative as we respond. For instance, we say "I believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth." The Creator, Keeper and Judge. I spoke of the commandment that says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Again, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His Son" who came to be the savior. In that connection we say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And, "I believe in the Holy Spirit" as the indwelling Companion. And this brings the power to realize what Christ in you actually means. We talked about this. I tried to diagram it as if he were one of my students.

He reported to me that he had in prayer to God said, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe that you made me as I am and that I am your creature. You know all about me. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and even though I am not worthy I really believe that if I were to die today and go into thy presence, while I am not worthy I would not think it anything against me because I do believe that Christ Jesus died for my sins. But if the Holy Spirit is real and there is such a thing as having the indwelling power of God working in me, that is what I want."

That afternoon he became joyful; his spirit was lifted. Before evening he was even more joyful when it dawned on him God had heard his prayers. He called his sister in Richmond, Indiana, where she is a professor of counseling. They had discussed spiritual experiences many times. He said it was the most marvelous thing and when he opened the Scriptures and began to read, every verse opened up before him in a new way. He began to read far into the night with joy because of the marvelous things he now understood.

His mother listened with tears of joy as he related what had happened as God was working in his soul. When he told his brother (who is a minister) what had happened, he learned that his brother understood. From that time on a new life opened up to John in a remarkable way and to this day he is conscious of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in his heart by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 19

Quiet Revival

Do you realize that even though a person has experienced close fellowship with the Lord such a person may at times need revival?

Revival is a term common to the language of believers. It is important because the level of personal communion with the living Lord does not remain constant. In Revelation 2:2-4 we read seven messages from the Lord Christ directed to the churches:

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write . . . I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

This is a remarkable description of faithful service on the part of this church but it is possible that, just as it can happen in marriage, so it can happen with the Bride of Christ. It can happen to the individual member and to a congregation. A believer can have seasonal changes – springtime, summer, fall and winter -in his own experience. And during the winter season the trees look dead; in springtime the buds quicken and in the summertime the foliage is nice and green.

As pastor at one time I was concerned about the tone of devotion in my members. Some members attended all of the meetings of the church while some members did not attend any. There were members who studied the Bible and others who did not. There were members who made a practice of praying while others never did. They were all my people.

It became clear to me that all this is really a matter of heart. The heart of some is in it and the opposite is true of others and as pastor I had the problem of stimulating response in the heart of all believers. Today they talk about young people going steady: the historic term is courtship, and courtship requires proximity. They need to be together and naturally, they want to be together. Now evangelism requires personal contact – there is no other way in the world to do it. If you do not ever see a person it is very hard to be that person's friend. Personal contact is an outgrowth of regard and esteem; therefore, I raised the question with myself as pastor: how could I get my congregation to regard the Lord more highly?

I began research into the history of revivals and realized from what I read that prayer was the important thing. I felt even in that leadership was needed and I was the pastor. I would need people to pray with me. So I began to attend revival services where they were held, regardless of the denomination. I heard of a young evangelist who was preaching about sixty miles from Dallas, where I was minister. On a certain day I invited two young men to accompany me to hear him and while we were driving along I raised a question for their consideration: when does a congregation need revival? We talked it over and decided on several items which we discussed back and forth. We listened to the man preach and it was not an exceptional sermon but it was sound.

On the way home I raised another question: does our church need a revival, and it was agreed it was obvious our congregation needed revival. As we passed through a small town one of the young men asked me to pull over to the curb and stop. Whereupon the three of us entered into a pact of prayer. We three felt we could come into His presence and we agreed that we would individually pray that God would send a revival to Westminster. We would not meet together; we would do this privately.

This was in June. In September there was a Board meeting of the elders and deacons and they met to deal with a budget deficit, which was unusual for our church. They had a practice of taking a Sunday morning service for a special meeting to raise money for the budget (which I begrudged). I proposed to the group that we cut salaries of those on the church payroll and when they were going to settle on this, one of the officers challenged the group to do something about it. They asked what they could do and he said for one thing they could attend all services which they did not do; they would also attend Wednesday

night prayer meeting. They really told each other how they felt about the whole matter, and at the end of the discussion they agreed that for the next ten weeks every officer would come to the two Sunday services and the Wednesday evening prayer meeting service, unless God stopped him. That was on Monday night. I suggested they should not let the congregation have this happen without knowing about it.

The next day the women were having their meeting at the church so they appointed a committee to tell the women the next day that on Wednesday night at the prayer meeting all the officers would be present at prayer meeting. Instead of the usual small group on that Wednesday night we had eighty-five. It was a tremendous thing. At that point I shared with the group as a whole what the officers had done and they appointed a special visitation committee of forty-three members. That is too many for a committee but do you know what happened? They were to meet on Friday night at 7:30 and two men called to say they would be out of town and at 7:15, forty-one were there.

I knew right away something was stirring. And for ten weeks all of the officers attended all meetings. That was the beginning of what in our church was a quiet revival.

Chapter 20

Revival

Do you understand that the believer should not only know the will of God but he should obey it?

It is so common that discussion about being a believer amounts to an exchange of opinions. Many sermons and addresses deal with the problems of what would be preferable and they will urge this as the things to do or that as the way to be. Even sincere, earnest souls are preoccupied with doctrine or with theology and spend their time explaining things. It is only as time has gone on in my own spiritual experience that I have more and more become impressed with the idea that it makes all the difference in the world if I decide to do, then act in faith along the lines of the promises which I understand.

I should like to continue the discussion of the situation as it developed in the congregation where I was pastor. After my officers (and that means my elders, deacons and the preacher himself) agreed to act in line with our belief in God, we undertook to act according to the way we believed. In the ten week program, we tried to encourage everybody in the congregation to sign up for the program and soon everything was revitalized. The singing took on an entirely new flavor; Sunday School activities were increased and visitation went on more and more. In January the treasurer asked me if I thought it would be vain for him to pray there would be no deficit in the finances that year and I told him I did not think there would be anything amiss, that the Lord would understand it to be an exercise of faith and I would join him. At the end of the church year the shortage was \$165.00 the last day or so, but additional contributions brought the shortage to \$40.00. While in his office a visitor came and he asked if finances were in good shape. When informed of the \$40 shortage he made out a check for that amount. (The visitor was a deacon who served on a federal commission and was unable to attend church.) So all the bills were paid.

The next year was the year the depression hit. We did not know the depression could come but by April, as we started the new year, the treasurer suggested the other deacons be in on the thrill, so he invited them to join with him on Wednesday evening. The service began at 8 o'clock and he asked them to come at 7:30 for a half hour prayer meeting before the regular prayer meeting. Twelve deacons came to pray that this year there would be no deficit. We continued to pray but conditions were getting tighter so that by September there were only six left to join us. By December three came and in January one of those

three said, "I will have to drop out. I believe in God and in prayer but I don't think there is that much money in the country and I cannot honestly come and ask for something I don't believe in." That left the treasurer and myself; we thought we should continue since the Lord had put it on our hearts. We would not tell anybody about it; we would just keep on praying. During that month of March the congregation surprised everybody with their sacrificial giving but in spite of everything that was given we were \$600 shy.

That Sunday night a person phoned and asked how much money we needed and when I told him, he said that the next day at noon he wanted me to meet him in the lobby of a specified bank at which time he would give me an envelope containing six one hundred dollar bills on the one condition that if anybody asked where it came from I was to say, "An angel gave it to me." When I turned the money over to our treasurer he asked right away, "Where did you get it; did you rob a bank?" And I had to tell him an angel gave it to me.

That sank deep into the hearts of our people. What actually did happen in that incident? Just a matter of staying in there and depending upon God, asking Him according to His promises and putting into exercise the faith that we subscribed to. We believed in it and may the Lord bless you as you read it. That is just how it happened.

Chapter 21

Can you understand that there is much to be learned about praying?

No doubt the common practice is to omit praying as a way of getting things done. When people talk about getting things done they usually try to do something about it. As long as we can do anything in our own strength we look to our own ways of doing it because we think we have to get something done by working for it. James wrote a very simple comment, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." He wrote further, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." That is possible – you could be asking for the wrong thing "That ye may consume it upon your lusts." This seems to emphasize that a person could miss the blessing by not knowing how to do it.

Again and again the Gospel records show that Jesus of Nazareth would ask the person coming to Him – for instance, the blind man – "What will ye that I should do unto you?" He asked the man by the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole?" This seems to say "Be specific. Decide on what you want and ask for that."

We often tend to say, "Lord bless us" when we do not specify in what way. All of this became obvious to me in the course of my experience as pastor. In the developing of spiritual interest and believing prayer in my congregation we learned that being specific in our requests actually contributed to the blessing which we received.

Some two years after our ten week program we had a ten days series of special services just before Easter. The meetings began on Wednesday evening and after the Thursday evening meeting the visiting preacher confessed to me that for some reason he did not feel free in that pulpit. He said he was not a great preacher but he could preach better than that and he did not know why he did not feel free. I asked if it would be all right to suggest a special prayer meeting on Saturday night and he agreed. Sixteen men came and we spent an hour in prayer. When I asked if they thought it would be any better the next day no one could say. I drew attention to the fact the preacher had said he did not feel free in the pulpit and I also pointed out that in any such series of services Satan is an active enemy. We felt that the thing to do was to pray for the deliverance of the pulpit and at 12 midnight we went into the church sanctuary. We did not

turn on the lights lest we attract attention and we prayed on our knees to Almighty God that He would free that pulpit from any restrictions and set the preacher free in spirit to preach as he felt led to preach.

By that time it was 1 o'clock and one of the men said his wife had figured it would be just like this and she had sent doughnuts and coffee and they would be in the kitchen.

After awhile I spoke to the men, reminding them we had prayed for three hours about this matter and asked how many thought it would be better tomorrow. In our discussion we agreed on several things: if the preacher, when he went into the pulpit on Sunday, showed evidence of having liberty of spirit in preaching, we would say that it was an answer to prayer. One man was anxious that at one time during the services the sanctuary would be full. We asked for one other thing: that there should be open response to the invitation. In that particular congregation the people did not get up from their pews and walk down to the front of the church in response to an invitation.

It was 3 o'clock in the morning when we separated to go home. We all agreed we would not say anything about it to anybody. And the next time that preacher got up to preach he had not said more than three or four sentences when I turned and looked at our treasurer and he nodded his head. There was no doubt about it: that man was free.

He preached well each evening but nobody ever responded and at no one time was the church filled. The next Sunday morning, when I came to preach I could tell when I walked into the pulpit a few moments before time for the 11 o'clock service that things were different. The place was full. They kept bringing in chairs and more chairs. I turned and looked at my treasurer, sitting in the choir, and he wept when he saw what was happening.

It is easier to preach in a situation like that; I preached and gave the invitation and it had never happened in that church: twenty-seven people came forward down the aisles. The people did not want to go home. Instead of our church service being over at 12 o'clock, at 12:30 they were still there singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." It was a wonderful, amazing thing. The congregation was never the same again.

I was in that church for several years after that and we saw many things happen but that particular prayer meeting lingers in my mind to this day. I particularly want to emphasize that somehow I was moved to hold our praying men to this one thing: what will it take to satisfy you that you have actually had an answer to prayer – specify it, say it in so many words. We did and God blessed us.

Chapter 22

Hitherto Hath The Lord Helped Us

Can you understand that the ways of God are past finding out?

Many persons miss much blessing because they do not accept the promise of God unless they feel they can understand or see it. We may read in the Bible, "I will be with thee" and because we cannot see Him nor feel Him and because we do not see how He could affect the situation we are in, we do not believe. We need to challenge our hearts to believe whatever He has promised, whether we understand it or not. I may be in a situation where I need help so I make my request according to the need I feel. Then, since I do not see how the Lord could do anything about it, I do not expect anything. It is a wonderful comfort to know that God can do more than I can ask or think.

When I was called out of the law office to give my life as a missionary, I entered into a new way of living. In the next few weeks I spent much time in trying to realize my new life; I prayed for and expected

guidance. But I tried to understand it, too. And as I pictured my life as a missionary to witness for Christ in all the world among strange people I felt that I could do better if I were not alone. At the time I was twenty-four years of age. I had been teaching school since seventeen years of age and in that time I had spent two years in the army. When I enlisted in the military I expected to be killed in action. That may sound rather strange to some but it was not strange in my time. Two out of five boys I knew as lads are lying in Flanders Field right now. So I kept to myself. I had cherished companionship with some wonderful young women. At times I had thought of marriage but I was never really committed to any one of them. I was afraid of it; I just did not know what one would come into if you tied yourself up for the whole of your life.

I felt clearly and quite sensibly that I could do better if I were not alone, married to a fellow servant of Christ. It then dawned on me that I could easily make a mistake in choosing my bride. Because I was now a missionary volunteer people acted differently toward me. I prayed that God would bring the right girl to me and I indicated in my heart as well as I could that I was not going to make any approaches to anyone until I felt that this was the girl who possibly should be my partner.

I had decided to go to Biola, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, to prepare for the mission field. I would need some money to go and I had no idea about student loans or getting help from anybody else, so I sought employment as a school teacher to earn money to go to California. I heard of a school five or six miles away that would be open after Christmas. I heard about it in the fall and made application. I was accepted, which resulted in the fact that I came over to this school to meet with the Trustees to sign my contract at the very time they were at the school checking out the former teacher, a young woman called Sarah Bernstein, and so we met. She had planned a Christmas concert and I helped her put it over. The people with whom she was boarding invited me to spend the night at their home after the concert. There are always many details in getting a group of children to put on a program before their parents and to fill in the program we even sang a duet together. We had never, of course, done such a thing and I had never sung a duet in my life.

After the program they had a community dance. She did not dance and I did not dance and that gave us time to visit. So we sat together and chatted and during that time I learned that she was a missionary volunteer also. We decided there was no reason for us to stay until the dance was over so we walked home. It was over a mile and snow was on the ground. As I prepared to retire, thinking over all that had happened, it struck me almost in a strange way: could it be that this was the girl? In my eyes she was beautiful. She was very accomplished and had good ideas. I did not think she could be interested in a person like me but if the Lord – well, it just might happen. And with that I fell asleep.

The next morning she was leaving immediately after breakfast; she had a long way to drive with a team of horses and a sleigh to the nearest railroad station, where she was catching a train. I realized that I knew nothing about her personally but I had prayed to God and I felt in my heart the Lord would know. I had no opportunity to chat with her at all and as we were shaking hands and saying good-bye I blurted out, "I won't know where you are." She casually answered, "Well, I told you what I was going to do." And she went away.

I remembered then she had said she would send her address to one of the children. Since we lived about seventeen miles from town it was customary if any of the neighbors went to town to pick up the mail for everybody. There was no local delivery at that time. When the mail was handed to me at school to distribute to the children I recognized her handwriting. I said to the group that their former teacher had indicated she would send her address to one of them and if by any chance any of them ever did receive a letter, they were to let me know and I would put her address on the board. When the child who had received the letter spoke up I feigned surprise and wrote the address on the board very carefully so all would be able to get it. That is how I got her address. I wrote to her and she wrote to me. After five months of correspondence, we went to the same lake resort for a vacation: Sarah, her two sisters, and I.

And now I suppose it belongs in here to say that three days afterwards we were engaged. If anyone were to think that was rather sudden, I will tell you it was not as sudden as it could have been. It could have been the first day. But I decided not to be in a hurry so I waited for a couple of days. It was one of the strangest things – even at the time we were engaged to be married I realized that I knew very little about her family but I had put my trust in the Lord and I felt no doubt that this was what the Lord wanted.

And so, I could tell you right now "Hitherto that the Lord helped me." And I want to mention this, when you are putting your trust in the Lord, when you are expecting Him to do something for you, have this in mind: He can do it for you even if you do not see how. If you put your trust in the Lord, you can expect that He will answer you.

Chapter 23

As For Me And My House

Do you realize a young couple just married can plan to have a blessed home?

It would be natural to expect that when married, a couple would plan for blessedness. No doubt many expect to live happily ever after. The sad fact is that human nature is sinful. When I have said sinful, I mean selfish. That is exactly what it is. And blessedness does not follow automatically because two young people come together. However, there is a way that a couple can plan procedures they can follow that do lead to blessedness.

After Joshua had spent his lifetime leading the children of Israel into the promises of God, he realized that he could not control them. In spite of all that he had said and done in leading them, they would do as they pleased. Joshua could see that many would go their own way and not be blessed, so he brought all the people together before the Lord and laid down a plain, blunt challenge. These are the words of Joshua found in Joshua 24:14, 15:

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

This was the firm, settled objective of my bride and myself when we got married. Before we ever met, each of us belonged to the Lord, whom we chose to follow. And each of us had been called to serve Him. I felt in my own spiritual understanding that getting married was not going to interfere with my call and my young bride thoroughly understood that getting married would not interfere with her call. Each of us believed in the blessing of God and we wanted it. I felt especially challenged to be the best husband I possibly could be. When I considered that this young girl had made a commitment to give herself to me, as fine and as sweet and as gifted as she was, she would be mine, limited to my stride. She would walk with me; she would have to put up with me.

I decided early and completely, for all time, that the least I could do would be to ask the Lord to guide me that I might do as I should. I expected to make many mistakes – I often had. I often came up short in many ways. But I would listen and I would seek advice; more than once I heard, when I sought the Lord's mind, His word of guidance to Abraham who, when he went to God and asked on a certain occasion what he ought to do, heard, "In all that Sara hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice." Many times in my own experience that was as clear as words could put it.

In looking back over the fifty-two years of our married life I can see several procedures we followed together from the very first. We did not have to change our mind – our minds were made up before we were married. The first thing was, we prayed together. No matter what the situation was, we would turn to Scripture. That was the Word of God. I would lead in prayer, not because I was good or because I was smart or perfect. No, but because whatever my failing, our hope was in God, not in me. In the second place, we honored the Sabbath Day. We did no unnecessary work from the very first, no buying and selling on Sunday. We stood together firm on that – if we were to have anything to eat or drink or anything to wear it was not to be bought on Sunday. We honored the Sabbath Day. I do believe that was very important. I think that God honors those who honor Him.

In the third place, we tithed our money. I had to learn this from my wife; she would not have thought of doing anything else. When we started out our income was \$10 a week. We lived in a home that was provided for us. It was a tent house with a wooden floor; the walls and the ceilings were just a tent over us. We lived in that and we received \$10 a week; the tithe of that is one dollar a week. Not only did we set aside that first dollar as a tithe but that good wife of mine saved money.

In the fourth place we shared in communion with other believers. We went to church. Even after the children came and my wife stayed at home with them, I went to church even when I was not preaching. At one time, while teaching school in Manitoba, the church of my denomination had as preacher a man who was not a believer. He did not think the Bible was the truth; he did not think the Old Testament characters ever lived. I had had long discussions with him and questioned whether I should even go there; then I faced the question, should I not be there?

At home with the children the basic rule was that no games were to be played at home during services at the church. Later at seminary, on nights the students preached, my wife (who was good at anagrams) refrained from playing during those hours. She shared in those things.

I learned from her to give to missions. I can remember the joy she had when on occasion in later life we had a little more money to handle and a certain call came and it looked as though we should give \$50. When the time came, I wrote a check for \$100. I shall never forget the joy on her face. I had learned about giving to the Lord's work.

Another thing we did from the very first: we gave to the poor. That was a basic rule. The poor could always find something at our place.

And so, in those ways we made up our minds that as "for me and my house, we would serve the Lord."