

Active Faith Conquers Temptation

by Billy Strachan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trials and challenges in Christian growth and development, and encourages Christians to rejoice in the midst of them and to trust God to work in their lives.

Duration: 46:35

Scripture: Exodus 15:1, James 1:2-11

Topics: "Temptation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker talks about how people often try to keep themselves and others confined and discontented, instead of allowing them to experience freedom and abundance. He emphasizes the importance of trusting in God and relying on Him in difficult circumstances, just as Jesus did when faced with a challenging situation. The speaker also highlights the need for believers to be a source of comfort and blessing to others who are going through trials. He warns against withdrawing from society and avoiding responsibilities, reminding listeners that God takes His people through reality rather than away from it.

Transcript

Now then, put a new section to your notes, three, and put down as a title Active Faith Conquers Temptations. Active Faith Conquers Temptations. We've looked at the principle of faith in these last lectures and now we're going to see the practice of faith.

Now you won't find me mentioning faith much more from now on in because I'm going to assume that you know and take it as already read that what we discuss will involve your obedience and yieldance to Christ in a practical manner. So we're taking that as read and that you know that. So under three, Active Faith Conquers Temptations, put A, A, Temptation Worketh Patience.

Temptation Worketh Patience. Chapter 1, verses 2 to 11. James 1, 2 to 11.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have a perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Now, the word temptation in these first eleven verses speaks of trials more than temptation to sin, as you would think of temptation. It's dealing with the outward circumstantial trials that are inconvenient to your daily kind of living. In other words, the daily routine of chaos that comes your way that you haven't planned.

Outward circumstances and trials that are chaotic to your preconceived idea of how smooth your day should be. Now, those circumstances and pieces of chaos can be divine or otherwise, and we'll see that as we go on. But James says here to these early Christians, whatever you do, when you suddenly find everything going wrong, and you find that circumstances, outward pressures, trials, frustrations, lonelinesses, fears, pressures, all these things are really squeezing in on you, he says, rejoice.

Rejoice. Now, why would he say that? Well, it's because these kind of trials are an essential to Christian growth. These kind of trials are an essential to Christian growth.

You see, too many young people get up in a testimony meeting, and they say to the unconverted in the audience, I have a Savior who saves, keeps, and satisfies. And he sees me through all the problems in my life. The only thing is, they've never had any problems in their life, because the church has so organized the social circle in which they will live, that they keep them from out there-ism.

And so they do everything they can to protect the little Christian, so that he doesn't get his nose bumped, and doesn't reach and touch the things of the world. And that's a disaster. And then you find Christian parents in tears, looking at you and saying, what went wrong, Bill? How come I did everything I could to protect Johnny and Mary from sin, and the world, and the devil? And now they've absolutely gone rebellious, haywire, and they're hightailing it over the hill, sewing their own notes faster than they can read them.

What went wrong? Why has this happened to our family? Why is it that we are having to suffer the indignity of a child that's gone astray? And we tried so hard to bring him, bring her up, away from sin. That's totally untheological. And that was their problem.

Sin isn't out there. Sin is in here. And if you bring a child up in a family, and leave it with the impression that the reason mommy and daddy wants you to spend all day in church, is that if you go outside the church, and outside the family unit, you'll come in touch with the world, and sin, and become a sinner.

And that is untheological. And so you find that there's a fellow, or a girl, that grows up in the Christian family, goes through Sunday school, goes to Christian school, Christian day school, Christian high school, Christian college, Christian cemetery, seminary, and right through into a Christian theological training, and from the Christian theological training into the Christian pastorate, he gets ordained, he's now a pastor, and somebody comes into his study and swears at him after the morning service, and he collapses. You

said a dirty word.

And he considers that they've really upset the sanctuary, they've desecrated the holy place, because he's never heard anything like that. Dreadful! That my ears should hear things like that. Yes, it's a pity that it goes like that, and then the wonder why they can't help the unlovely, why they can't help the sinner, because they're totally imbalanced, totally imbalanced in their experience.

And I know that if I were running the school, and had my way, I wouldn't let any of you come until you'd been in a factory a couple of years. But I'm not running the school, see. Some of you've come here far too young, far too soon.

You shouldn't be here at all, and you don't know what life is about. You never really stood up to the knocks, you never seen the worst of things, and that's one of the reasons you're totally discompassionate towards the lost. Because, you see, you sit down and just legislate the gospel to them, and you don't understand.

You can't really sit in tears with a man that's an alcoholic. And I'm not advocating you go out and take alcohol, at all. You can't really sit down and have compassion on the immoral, because you've never mixed with it, you've never understood it.

You've been so protected from it, and it gives you a false balance to life. Whereas the man that's had the knocks, been through the trouble, he finds that these things make him very soft and tender in heart, and give him a deeper understanding, and a deeper awareness of what it means to have mercy. You say you've got mercy of Jesus Christ, I know what mercy is.

To you it's a theological word, to me it's one of the greatest things God has ever shared with me, is his mercy. And that doesn't mean you hide fairly out of here, and try to get all the experiences. Don't design getting into the dirt.

You won't have to, you'll just end up in it. And that's why I'm always thrilled when there's a family where within the family unit, there's one who has been deprived of being tempered by the world and its system, and discovering his own depravity, so that he knows why he needs mercy, why he needs Christ. I'm always thrilled when he bursts out.

And I've said to parents, they've said, why? I've said, I'm not worried about them. I think it's tremendous that they've opened the gilded cage and the bird has flown the coop. Because you see, once they find themselves, they'll come back, but they'll know why they're coming back.

There's nothing worse than the brother of a prodigal, who stayed at home and hated the mercy that was shown to his brother. And you know, I've often asked people, what is the greatest verse in the parable of the prodigal son? And they always say to me, oh, the father welcoming the son back, giving him the ring and the shoes and the robe. It isn't.

The greatest verse is the father letting them go in the first place. And the trouble with too many Christian families and churches is they're afraid to let you go. God isn't.

God isn't. God will let you go. That kid marched into his father and he said, father, I know you've got an awful lot of wealth.

What are you going to do with it? Share it with you. When I die, you're getting your cut. Yeah, I thought that.

The only thing is it looks like you're going to last a long time. Any chance of going soon? No, I'm not planning on dying, son. Oh, why not give me my cut now, daddy-o? And father looked that kid straight in the eye.

And though the youth think the old are stupid and don't know, father knew. Kid, as soon as I put my name to that check, you are out that door and down that road like a rocket. And father said, that's why I'm going to sign the check.

And he let him have it. And the kid stood there with his wonderful performance, smiling at daddy-o and saying, thank you, daddy. And as he went out the door, and he shut the door, and he, yah! Woo! Sucker! I got it! And he blew it.

He ran as fast as he could until he just was living in a pig pen. Eating slot in a pig pen. And then the scripture says, and he came to himself.

That was the last friend he had, himself. And he says, I'll go back to be a slave. Now all that time, his father had been looking for the return.

Just waiting for him coming back. And he came back and said, I'm no more worthy to be called your son. He said, welcome home.

Get the shoes, get the robe, have the fatty calf on the plate. We're going to have a ball, because now you're alive. Yes, it's necessary to go through it.

Not by personal design. You don't have to run out and taste the thing to gain the experience. That'll come in its own way.

But it won't come if you completely isolate yourself. And remember kids, when the pastor, and the Sunday school teacher, and mum and dad say to you about the things that are the evidences of a depraved heart, don't do that. And don't do that.

And don't do this. You often sit there thinking, they're trying to say to you, don't do it because you let the church down, the pastor down, the deacons down, you let mum down, the father down, the home down, the family down. No, no.

What they're trying to say to you is, don't do it because your mum and dad did it. Don't do it because the pastor's done it. Don't do it because we have done it.

And we know the price you pay, the scars you wear, the battle you face. And we'd rather see you not go through that. But that's totally dishonest.

You have to. You see there's a verse in John's gospel where Jesus says, I am the door, if by me any man enter in, he shall be saved. There's no doubt about it, he's mine if he enters by me.

But then he said a rather unusual thing, and he shall go in and out and find pasture. Now, pasture is that which is of a nutriment value to feed a growing lamby until it's a sheepy. See? And the thing is, if you just keep it all penned up, it doesn't help.

There is as much nutriment value for your Christian experience outside in life as there is inside the fold. And too many bring you into the fold and keep you in. And that's a disaster.

We had sheep here years ago. The most awkward beggars under the sun they were. The best rose-eating sheep in Lancashire.

If there was a way up through a drain into that rose garden, they found it. And if they were at the other end of the estate, and the student left a gate open two inches, one looked up, they all looked up, they all went. High-tailed it right through the hole.

You'd get them in the gardens, you'd get them around the patio out there, everywhere. And we had to dip them for foot rot. So they made a lovely pen up in the top field beside luscious green grass that would satisfy them, and they built a little pen or church for them, a nice little meeting house.

Typical of Christians, they didn't make it big enough to begin with. And of course they managed to get them there, and they shoved them all in, there wasn't enough room, and they finally shoved them here till they had all these 210 sheep all crammed up against each other in this lovely little pen. And by the time we got them in, it was time to go for elevensies.

And that took an hour. And so when we came back, thinking they'd be satisfied, they weren't. You know there wasn't a blade of grass to be seen anywhere.

Those little black stiletto heels that they wear that just pulverize the grass to bits. And now they were thoroughly discontent, just dirt under their feet, looking at each other's faces, unable to move. You know, you're caught dirty.

Ah, so you're, you know. And they were just bleeding and buying and fed up and bored. And you know, to keep them happy till we dipped them, we had to go and get artificial feeding.

You ever seen it? It's like bullets made of sawdust. Little pellet things, and they come with a sack and you tip them over their back and then amongst their feet and they're trying to get these things, thoroughly discontent. And you know, I stood back and I looked at it and I remembered that verse and I said to myself, boy, no wonder he lets them out.

No wonder he lets them out, because if you let the things out, outside that pen there was nearly a hundred and seventy acres of luscious green grass. And if we just let them out for a bit, the grass in the fold will thicken again and rise again. And you see, the trouble is we get you in and we keep you in.

We keep you in. And so I go around the churches and ministers are saying to me, do you know any new things to keep them happy? What's the latest films they're using in the north? Any new ideas? Because my crowd, boy, if I don't get something new soon, oh, it's going to be awful. They're just looking at each other saying, I hate Christianity.

It's a drag. It's a bore. Pastor, entertain us.

Pastor, give us artificial feeding. Pastor, give us something to content us while we're strapped and hemmed in. And I've often said to these ministers, do you really want them to feel fresh and zealous and real keen about church activity? He said, yeah, I'd give anything to see my lot spiritual.

I said, good. Cancel one of your meetings and let them have a night off. What? What? But they might go to the cinema.

So what? You're watching in your telly at home the films you said 10 years ago came from hell. So why should they be hypocrites like that and wait 10 years to see it in the house? Might as well get it when it's fresh. And if they can't choose a film with discretion, then they'll know why they need Christ.

Let them go. Give them a meeting less. It would do some of them good to have a meeting less in the week.

I mean, the Christian church has broken up the family. You go to church on Sunday, you never see each other because you're all in your different classes. It's supposed to be a family day, a different day.

And the house becomes the hotel that you live and sleep and eat in between meetings and work. Mum's at her meeting on Monday night, and you're at yours on Tuesday night, and dad's at his on Wednesday night, and somebody else's at his on Thursday night. They're all things so broken up, the family hardly meets.

And I think there's one thing that we really need is a chance to get to know each other. And to do that, you might have to miss a meeting. Once you get out into life and live, once you get out of the pain and the Lord leading you out, leading you out, you might get a little bit dirtied out there and you might get a little bit bumped around and you might get into all sorts of situations that are chaotic and full of temptation and testing.

But boy, there's only one thing it's guaranteed to do. That's strengthen your faith. I always think it's pathetic to go up to the Keswick convention.

And I know that Keswicks are great things and everybody has a Keswick. But it's kind of pathetic to see 15,000 odd Christians converge in that lakeside town for one week in the year. And oh, it's a great week of fellowship.

Everybody going down the street, praising the Lord and giving out tracts to each other. Marvelous. Marvelous.

And I always say to myself, do they stop when they're individuals back in London, back in Glasgow, do they stop and take their hats off at the street corners then and have little prayer meetings? No, they don't. It's great when we're like a body, big strong body of people. And then we say to ourselves, isn't it terrible these wayward youths that go around in hell's angels gangs.

They're afraid to be individuals. They've always got to be in a gang. Gives them a false sense of confidence, false assurance, false ability, false power.

And they need each other. Wouldn't do half of the detrimental things they do in society if they were individuals. It's the gang system that creates all the trouble in the town.

And if we could just divide the gangs, we would have less trouble. Then you turn and look at the church and what have we got? Heaven's angels. And they're all in their gangs as well.

Because we call it fellowship. And it's so easy to go out and witness in a group as an individual. Oh yeah, there's an awful lot that's going to happen to you outwardly, out there.

And God won't be at all afraid to let you go. Because he knows that it's going to really give you a chance to prove what you've said in your testimony. Christ saves, keeps and satisfies through the problems.

And God says, fine, so I'm going to take you out and give you some problems in which you can actively, by faith, allow Christ to save you and keep you and satisfy you through them. There's lots of nonsense to say he does that if you haven't had any that he's taking you through. And don't go looking for troubles to prove Christ in.

They'll come. They'll come. There's loads of them.

They're essential to your growth. Now there's no indication here of permission to ask why are these things happening to you? The exhortation is just to rejoice in the midst of it. Don't ask why.

When you see everything going wrong and everything upset in your daily program that you'd already mapped out, don't say why. Just rejoice. Just simply say, Father, I don't know what on earth you're up to.

I don't know what all this is about. But I've given you the right to do as you like in me today. So you take the consequences for this and by faith face the situation.

You don't have to be thankful for everything. It says in everything give thanks. That doesn't necessarily mean you've got to be thankful for every situation you're flung into.

But if you are in it, okay, be thankful in it. And just trust God to work something out through all that trouble. You see, one of our problems is that we so plan our day.

Even here in a Christian context, you'll get up tomorrow morning with your own ideas of what you're going to do tomorrow. And something will go wrong. And you'll automatically swear blind it's the devil upsetting your program.

It's not always the case. It's not always the case. You'll find that sometimes God is upsetting the program because he must find out if what you say is what you are.

He must find out if the principle of faith that you know about is what you're practicing. It's all right singing your heart off about hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise ye the Lord. But if you can't really do it when the trouble comes, you might as well cut out the song when the happy times are there.

You take a look back in Exodus 14. Exodus 14, verse 13. And Moses said unto the people, fear ye not, stand still, see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you today.

For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace. And God gave them their salvation as a free gift by grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.

They couldn't split the Red Sea. They couldn't cut the water out, make a hole in the water, mop through in dry land. They couldn't separate themselves from the old life and the old dominance of sin.

They couldn't do that. This was a work that God did. A definite work of salvation wrought of our God on their behalf.

A free gift of a passageway through the Red Sea, up on the other side to a new life. And they accepted the gift. And you know that nearly all of chapter 15 of Exodus is a tremendous song, a tremendous, shall we even dare to say, Pentecostal song of the greatness of our God.

A great praise meeting of what he's done. Just look at some of the wording of this song. Chapter 15 verse 1, Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord and spake saying, I will sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

He is my God and I will prepare him a habitation. My father's God and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war.

The Lord is his name and on and on it goes. My God, my song, my salvation. This is personal experience.

What a song. We're saved. Another one.

Look at verse 22. So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea and they went out into the wilderness of Shur and they went three days in the wilderness and they found no water. And they were bitter.

Wish I hadn't crossed that lesson. I knew this Christianity wasn't all cracked up to what it was supposed to be. Now me standing like a fool singing out of my heart about how great God is, how wonderful God is, now we've got trouble.

There's no water. You know the funny thing is they were where God told Moses to take them. Not the adversary.

They were going in the pathway God was leading them. And they passed through the Red Sea and were being directed by God under the leadership of Moses and God said I want you to take them there and he deliberately took them to a place where there was no water. Why? Well he just wanted to find out if the song, which was very nice, was what they were.

But you see what they were wasn't according to the song because you see that was the day they started moaning and they kept it up for 40 years. They hit a problem. They hit a trial in their life and as soon as they hit a problem this is this is why we didn't want to become Christian in the first place because we knew it wouldn't work.

We knew it wouldn't work and that's why we say we shouldn't become Christian because you don't get this victory. Yes but then that's because somebody fed you with the idea that victory means that there will be a life with no problems, no chaos, no trials, no circumstances to upset you and that was wrong of the evangelist that led you to Christ preached you that kind of a message. And all God was waiting to see is if they looked at the problem.

What is the problem? They need a cup of water. Why didn't they look back at the Red Sea and say what's that there? The sea. All of it? Yeah.

Wide isn't it? Very. There's a long walk across there. You walked across there? Didn't know you could walk in water.

Oh I didn't. Didn't you? No. What do you do? Shovel a hole in it? No.

How do you get across? God did it. Did he? Yeah. How do you do it? You split the water.

Split the what? Water. W-A-T-E-R. That stuff.

Wet. Did he? Yeah. He just split it and we walked through in dry ground.

Oh and it didn't drown you? No. Kept her up there all by himself and we came through and came up on the dry ground, the sea. What's today's problem? A cup of what? A cup of what? Water.

Well surely if God can tackle an ocean, a cup won't be too much. Hmm. Never thought of that.

You see we just always imagine them to be big enough for the ocean. For the biggest hurdle. The biggest issue.

But no use in today's problem. No use in the little thing of this morning that's upsetting our equilibrium. That grinds our personality.

That upsets our behavior. He's no use in that. And so often we feel that Christ is adequate at the cross to bear the punishment for the sin of the whole world.

He's adequate to guarantee us a place in eternity. He's adequate for that but he's just not a practical issue for this morning. Therefore when I see today's titchy little problem compared to my salvation and my soul, I collapse.

And I say I knew it wouldn't work. And all God was waiting for them was to say well if you could tackle the Red Sea, I'll thank you for a cup of water. You take the consequences.

Deal with the problem. And he would. But they didn't and they moaned for the rest of their experience.

And yet it was where God led them. God never, never leads his children away from facing problems. Never.

And if you've always thought that to be a Christian and have an active faith means that you're going to be able to go through a today of your experience getting away from problems and Jesus Christ guaranteed to keep you away from all the trouble spots, forget it. It's not in the book. And you'll never be men and women of God unless you're prepared to take a hold of Christ and go through the trouble, not round it.

You take the three Hebrew children that stood there Nebuchadnezzar said whenever you hear the music you will bow down to that idol that I have raised and worshiped or I'm going to pick you up and throw you in a harness heated seven times hotter than is necessary. Now what would your sweet little churchy Christian attitude be to that little problem if we had it in the courtyard tomorrow morning? If thou art late for breakfast we shall fling thee into a furnace heated seven times hotter than is necessary. The modern day reaction to a big issue like that, the threat of death, a furnace flames is we must have an all-night prayer meeting.

Oh God let there be a rainstorm tomorrow. Let there be a fuel shopping. Oh dear God let the miners go out and strike tomorrow especially so that we don't get that fire going.

God intervene. Kill Nebuchadnezzar. Take the furnace away.

God didn't answer any prayers like that. Now these fellows exercised faith. They said to Nebuchadnezzar we don't care what you say but if you throw us in that furnace you throw us.

God takes the consequences. He is able to deliver us but should he not we don't care we're not bowing down to that thing. We stand for God for what's right.

Our faith is in the living God. God takes the consequences for anything that happens to our life and I'm sorry to say it but if you fling us in the furnace tomorrow you fling us in the furnace. God is responsible for us.

He takes the responsibility. We walk by faith and we don't run away from reality we face it and that is important. I remember talking to a drug addict and he said I tried to convince him that drugs was an escape from reality.

He said well what have you got to put in its place and I said with absolute confidence Jesus Christ and he said rubbish. I said why? He said that's an escape from reality as well. I said what do you mean? He said well I've got pals at school and the minute they get converted they never saw them again.

They disappeared from society. They disappeared from talking in the playground with us and anytime you ever heard of them they were at meetings. They disappeared from life and in this talk and sing about Jesus saving them, keeping them, satisfying them through all the difficulties in life and it's a farce.

They've escaped from difficulty. They've escaped from reality. They've withdrawn from society.

So much so that they complain about how the government runs the country and they won't come out and run the country. They complain about how the town council runs the town. They won't go and sit in the town council.

They avoid the responsibilities of being a member of a society by saying that they belong to another nation. It's not of this world. This is a drug addict.

And you know I think he's right. We withdraw from living and we expect God to keep us away from all that. No, no.

God says I don't take my people away from reality. I take them through reality and the next morning the music sounded and those fellas refused to bow and they picked them up and took them to the door of this furnace and they threw them in. Right into the trouble and the Lord was waiting inside for them.

Morning fellas. Welcome to the flame. That's a new experience isn't it? How's your hair? I suppose it's gone.

Oh no it isn't. That's different isn't it? How's your shoes? They're all right. Your clothes? Well they should be burnt to bits but they're not.

Terrific isn't it? Well God did you just sort of do this miracle here in the fire just to give us these joyous experiences? No. I never take my children miraculously through trouble just for the sake of giving them a little thrill of going through trouble for once in their life. There's always an ultimate goal behind anything I do with my children and that is to make them a means of comfort and blessing to others that have yet to face the trouble.

Take a back look out through the door of the furnace and as they looked through the door of the furnace there was that mad king on his feet. Did not we throw three into the fire? I see a fourth like unto the son of man. Come forth Meshach Shadrach and Abednego of your God is God and they stepped out of the flames and that man got converted.

That's one of the reasons that outward trials and temptations and things like that are part and parcel of the essential experience of growing up as a Christian because the non-christian will take a look at you and he'll say there goes a fellow, there goes a girl and you know they've got all the problems I've got. I can tell that fellow's lonely and yet somehow or other he's not running for the bottle of pills or the razor blade or the rope and yet every night I discuss in my depths of loneliness let's just get out of the whole mess, let's kill myself. But there's a fellow that's gone through loneliness and he no longer thinks of killing himself.

What gives him his ability to stand up to loneliness? There's a fellow going through pressure, pressure under his work. He's going through pressure in his home. The circumstances he lives in are so difficult that if that was my problem today it would crush me, it would break me.

How come he doesn't break? Because his God is in him and by an act of faith going with him straight through the difficulties, not around it, through it. And you see if you're not prepared to have that in your experience you might as well the whole game up. That's why you pray too often, take the sin away from me.

Just take all the nuisances, all the things away from me. Then I'll be victorious. No, I'm glad God doesn't.

He likes to see you tempered. He likes to see you grow. He likes to see you develop.

He wants to see your reactions in the face of difficulties. You will trust Christ. You never found Christ in a panic in scripture.

And he was in many a hot spot where the next best thing would have been to run. But he always had a knife, definite trust in the Father. Standing there on the mountain, my Father knows what you have need of.

He doesn't see a bird fall but he cares. He feeds the birds, he clothes the fields with grass. He knows the very hairs of your head.

He's got them all numbered. My Father will give you everything. Take no thought what you shall eat or drink or wear with all you shall be clothed.

My Father knows you have need of these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be given unto you. I say fellas, it's eaty eat time.

Could you just feed you know 5,000 people? What? You haven't got anything. Why didn't you tell me before I said a sermon like that? I would have prefaced my remarks with there is a possibility that my Father could do this and perhaps God can do that. It may be, if it be thy will, that he could do this, that or the other thing.

I wouldn't have been so emphatic, I wouldn't have put God out on the limb. I've had the audacity to say he's feeding all that bit about feeding birds. And here we are, 5,000 people.

What are we going to do? We'd better have a struggling prayer meeting. What did you say you've got? Five loaves and five fishies? Well let's pray for a knife to cut the loaf into 5,000 bits. Well you don't find that.

What do you find the Lord doing when he faced a difficulty, when he faced a circumstantial trial, something that he didn't sort of plan himself to throw into the scene? You find him with an explicit trust in the Father, simply taking what was at hand, five loaves and five fishies, and he took it and he blessed it. In other words, he looked up to his Father and he said thank you. Thank you, this is your responsibility.

You take the consequences, not me. And there was 12 baskets left over. There was always the calmness about him.

I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Roll the stone away from the sepulcher.

Martha comes running up and says, he's been buried four days. Why didn't somebody get this news to me? Did you just hear what she said? Four days and she's just told me by now he stinks. You bet he'll stink.

I thought they'd buried him this morning, an hour ago before we'd come. Oh what are we going to do now? Corruption will have gone so far in this hot mid-east weather. Oh I wouldn't have put them in me standing up saying I am the resurrection and all.

I tell you fellas, let's do our best, eh? I know it'll, you know, just take a good deep breath, run in there, bring him out, hold him up and wiggle him. Give the, give the impression, give the impression that he's risen from the dead and when the folks have gone away, duped by our performance that we managed it, we'll put him back. Was that the reaction of Christ to that predicament? Did he bluff his way through it? Did he put on a performance to blind people into believing God really answered it but he didn't really? Nonsense.

He said, didn't I tell you? He said, Father, I know you always hear me. Lazarus, come forth. He came forth.

God takes the consequences right in the middle of every problem, even if you didn't foresee the problem. And some of you have had little broken hearts today because you were hit with things in your program that you didn't expect to be there today. And you thought, satanic opposition.

Not necessarily. It might just be the very place God led you today to see what your action would be in the face of all that we've discussed about faith. To see you in the face of the little problem, the irritation, the personality that grinds against you as you walk through the corridor.

The person you don't like met you too much today. All these little things that grind. Just to see what your reaction would be.

Do you run from it? Or do you stand and say, thank God for an opportunity to put Christ out in the land. Look who's coming down the stairs. Lord, you know I'd love to scratch her eyes out.

But here's a tremendous opportunity for once in my life not to run around the corner, run down the steps, run through the path to get away from the situation. Give me the grace as I rely upon you by faith to face up to meeting the unlovable person. And for once allowing you to speak to that person through me and fellowship with them.

That's growing up. Not removing the difficulties. Faithfully with Christ going through the difficulty.
Outward trials are an essential to growth.

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