

# Dedication Proved

by Devern Fromke

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of true dedication to God through understanding, acceptance, and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 1:11:39

**Scripture:** Genesis 22:1-2, Exodus 16:4, Deuteronomy 6:1, Deuteronomy 6:15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2

**Topics:** "Dedication"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of moving beyond the foundational teachings of the faith and progressing in our spiritual journey. He shares a story of a young man who was curious about the joy and love he saw in a group of believers and eventually came to know the Lord. The speaker highlights the need for a heart transformation and wholehearted devotion to God. He encourages believers to recognize the desperate need in the world and to be dedicated and unwavering in their faith, trusting in God's limitless power.

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## Transcript

Romans chapter 12, please. Let's see, who's joined us today? Who was not here yesterday or the day before? Anyone? A couple? Thank you. Praise the Lord.

We're speaking about dedication these days. I'm sure you can realize that's too big a theme for one week or five times. It's too big a theme for a year.

It'll take us all eternity to really find out what dedication means. And so, I'm just trying to give us just a few little of the details as we see the important things in this twelfth chapter of Romans. We started out the first day answering the question, what is dedication? What is dedication? Remember we said that it is God, through his mercy, that redeemed us by his own precious blood.

He bought us, he bought us out, and he loosed us. In order that, now that's his mercy, in order that we might what? Dedicate or present ourselves. So, we're just saying dedication is present.

What else can I do, Lord? You know it says in the scripture that he bought us with the precious blood. He bought us with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his.

Lord, I really can't do anything else but give myself, present myself to you. So, without going into this, we saw then that to present is one thing. Then he receives what has been presented.

I'd like to get into that because I think there's a lot involved in the sense that God receives or accepts what has been presented. And in the accepting of it, we saw that he applied the blood to our ear, opened our ear, he applied the blood to our hands, that which we do, what we do, and then to our feet, determining where we go. Yesterday, we went on to another portion, and we were dealing with the fact that this dedication is not just a blind doing something for God.

It just isn't, let's get out and work for Jesus. Dedication is according to renewed knowledge. Renewed knowledge.

You notice we have put the word renewed in. We started out by saying that Israel had a zeal, a dedication for God, but it was not according to knowledge. There's a renewed knowledge.

And the great struggle that's going on today in the religious realm is that people are dedicated according to their own vision of what they think God wants. They're giving God something, their time, their energy, they're burning out for the Lord, but all the necessity of saying that it's according to renewed knowledge. This morning, we're going on to the third phase, an element that's involved in dedication.

And it is this sense that we are to prove the will of God. The proving. Prove the will of God.

Now you know where we're getting this, don't you? Romans 12, 1, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable. Well, let's all read it together now. A living sacrifice, wholly acceptable under God, which is your reasonable service.

This little word reasonable means intelligent, and I like to say that it is a dedication, that it's a reasonable thing for me to do, but that my service likewise is to become an intelligent service. Oh, I think God has so much trouble with His lovely children. They are so busy doing and so eager to get things accomplished for Him.

He says, but I didn't tell you to do that. And we come back with our mess, we come back with the thing that He can't approve, and we wonder why His blessing, why it isn't upon it. He says, but you did that on your own.

You meant well. You meant well. So there is the coming into renewed knowledge.

And we were saying yesterday, that as we go on with the Lord, according to the teaching or the word we have, we're within guardrails on the highway, but when we get out, there's reproofing. The reproofs that come, there's the corrections, and all of it is to instruct us that we might come into renewed knowledge. And then we closed yesterday by saying, one of the most wonderful things in renewed knowledge is to discover that you just can't present your old self to the Lord and say, Lord, use me.

The only thing that can really be presented to God is that which has been through the cross, through the grave, comes up on the resurrection side. All I can present to Him is that which is on resurrection ground. It's my new life that's presented to Him.

Not just my old energy, not my old hands, as it were, my own strength and all that I think I can do for God. The talents, all these things, this isn't what God wants. We summed it up by saying that that which has passed through and is under the blood, He anoints, the oil always comes upon that where the blood has been placed, you see.

It's quite a drastic thing when we discover that our presenting, our dedication is not just according to our understanding, but God's very careful about it. And He anoints, and He only anoints, that which is really through on the resurrection ground. Well, we'll get into that as we go along.

So, you see, this is something we are learning. There's a constant supply, a constant renewing of our mind that we might come into a real understanding of God's ways. Now we come to this, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

This is the way we get our renewed knowledge. Renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I know it may sound strange, but there's a lovely two-fold proving that goes on.

He says in Malachi, Prove me. God is speaking. He says, Prove me.

Try me. Prove me. And guess who else gets proved when we prove the Lord? Are you with me? Who else gets proved? I tell you, it turns around wondering who's getting proved, doesn't it? Prove me, he says.

Prove me. Try me. And in the midst of it, we're the ones who are likewise proved.

So I'd like for a little bit this morning, well, maybe we ought to continue on. We begin to prove what is the will of God. Proving.

We'll see what that involves. Now we're headed for tomorrow, I think, for this dedication that finds its fulfillment. Finds its fulfillment in placing, or we could call positioning.

And this fulfillment, then, God's very careful about the way things get done. How many have ever discovered that? He just doesn't leave things to the slightest bit of our own imagination. This fulfillment, this real dedication, the fulfilling of it, is in the placing, the positioning that he has given, and it's in power.

But guess where the power comes from? It says, no energy of your own, none of your own strength. I'm going to position you, I'm going to place you, but I'm also going to give you all the energy of the power. And so, when we get to the next verses, you see, after the proving of the will of God, we come to verses 3 and following.

I don't think we'll go into it now. But we discover that in God's reckoning, in God's way, we are placed in a body. We become a member in the body.

And as a member in the body, it is there that we function, we find position, we find place, and we find the anointing or the power for all of our dedication. This thing, before we get through this week, I trust God will help narrow down until we see how lovely is the dedication, but how sharpened is the focus. And I'm sure God appreciates what we've done to the measure of our understanding, but all the renewed knowledge as He sharpens the dedication.

I believe the last ten years have been discovering in the lives of people and in our own life that God keeps sharpening and sharpening the focus until you see how much of the time you've wasted doing good and helpful things, but not really according to that which He really wants, you see. So, there comes a whole new set of priorities, dedication according to what God is after, the fulfillment then. And we will see.

I like to picture sometimes, I didn't plan to get into this until tomorrow, but we just, well, start off wrong, so. Here we are, we were saying yesterday, we're in Adam. And this is the family tree in Adam.

How does He move us out of Adam and bring us into Christ? Well, God's way of taking us out is that here on the cross, He literally wraps the whole family of Adam, every one of us, He carries us to the cross in His Son. And when God looks down on the cross, what does He see? He sees His lovely Son, the Lord Jesus. But He sees something else.

He sees all the wretched family of Adam wrapped up, as it were, and nailed there in Him. And isn't it interesting that He was called the first Adam, but Jesus is called the last Adam? And so when God says, I'm going to get rid of the whole family, the thoughts and the imaginations, the intent of their hearts, this evil continuum, I can't get anything good out of it, He wraps the whole thing up in His Son and nails it to the cross and He buries it in the tomb and He says, that's the last of Adam, the last Adam. And so, God looks down and He sees us in His Son.

When He was buried in Joseph's new tomb down here, we were buried with Him. When He rose from the grave, what happened? We rose, resurrection. Scripture actually pictures that when He ascended, ours was an ascension.

But here we are now, when God the Father has poured out the Spirit upon His Son, upon the head, we also get a glimpse that the Holy Spirit's outpouring comes upon the head plus the whole of the body. How do I get from Adam into a position in Christ? How do I move from one family to become a member of the body of Christ? Now we look at it from God's viewpoint for a moment. We see what He sees.

And here is an individual who comes and just in the most simple way says, Lord Jesus, I thank You for dying for me, shedding Your blood. And the moment an individual comes by faith to look to Calvary, to what Jesus did, in that moment, guess what God does? He puts the whole thing to your account. And He says, there you are, a hand positioned in the body.

And the tragedy is that while God sees it, God recognizes all of this. The great majority of people only get it by bits and pieces, just by bits and pieces. For example, the individual who comes to see that Jesus died says, thank You, Lord, for dying for me.

How much does he know of all of this? How much does he experience of it in reality? The reality of it comes just according to the measure that he has apprehended. And he appropriates the precious blood. You see, God looks and He sees the whole thing.

But all we see, all we see is according to the apprehension that we have. And by simple faith we say, thank You, Lord Jesus, for dying for me. As our brother was saying last evening, a little bit later on we discover that our problem is not just that we needed to be redeemed or saved from the things we've done, but we discover that God needs to deal with something in our life, that we are.

We begin to cry out, oh, wretched man that I am. Lord, I'm tired of plucking fruit off the tree all the time. Lord, isn't there something else, something better? He says, yes.

Just look back to Calvary again. Don't you know that when you were born, you were born crucified, but all you knew is that you were born? Are you following me? When you were born, that is when you were, when you were there at the cross and you saw Jesus dying for you, that's one thing. But now look back again and you see that He not only died for you, but He died as you.

You died in Him. Oh, it's a wonderful thing. Wonderful thing.

When we look back, I say we take another look at Calvary. There we discover God's remedy for the old life. And it's a blessed day when you realize that He buried the whole stinking mess in the tomb.

I just will be very abrupt about it because that's what it is. You see, so much of the time we've tried to consecrate, we've tried to dedicate something of the old as though God could use it. The flesh cannot please God.

The old creation cannot do anything for God. Just impossible. And so this is why if our dedication is to become very real and meaningful, we must look back to the cross again.

And there we see that God's place for the old Adam life and all that it is, is in the tomb. But, thank God, there's a rising from the grave. We've been crucified and buried together.

We rise together in Him. And I believe that some people have suddenly got beyond the negative aspects of things to see that they begin to live by His life. I think you can go on for a long time before that really begins to lay hold of you.

I did, for years, emphasize nothing but two aspects of Calvary. Jesus died for me, and I died with Him, but I didn't get out of the grave. God saw me out, but I didn't.

I don't know how to say this. You see, you can be so involved and so wrapped up in the negative aspect of what God has done, that you pound your fist and say, I'm going to keep dead. I'm going to live a crucified life.

And one day, we begin to see that we're, we not only have all the negative work that's dealt with, but now we come to see that we live by His life. And that is a whole new apprehension. Praise God, I'm nothing but a failure.

Hallelujah! The day I discovered I couldn't live it. I shock people every now and then. They come up and say, Brother, I'm just not going to try.

I'm going to quit. It's impossible. I can't live a Christian life.

And you know what I say? Hallelujah! What a blessed discovery. They say, What are you talking about? I say, That's the day when God can show you that you're living by the life of the Son of God. Oh, I can't emphasize it too much this morning.

I'm convinced that in our deeper life and Bible conferences, there are throngs of people who have never come to the living appropriation of Jesus Christ as their life. They doctrinally know it, but they don't know it in experience. They don't know it in reality.

They don't know it in its livingness. So, praise the Lord the day you get out of the grave. Now remember, God sees it all, what? Done.

Finished. Here we are. Resurrected.

But not only resurrected to walk around in newness of life, I think he just takes sort of a shortcut right over and he says, Frankie, you be a good toe down here. I'm going to position you. I'm going to place you.

I see folk all the time who've gone on in the enjoyment of the life of the Lord and the privilege of being a partaker of his life. And then they suddenly discover that this life has some very restrictive aspects to it. Uh-oh.

It's not just life to use. This life of the Son of God, it works only in a certain way. I can't use this life just for myself.

This life begins to bring me into the relatedness of one another, of others, you see. And so, while God from the beginning saw the whole thing that happened, again I get another bit in peace, you see. And I say, praise the Lord.

I see now why I enjoy being with the company of the Lord's people because I am a part of a body. I'm a part of a body. And so this is why he says in 1 Corinthians that by one spirit we are baptized or we are planted into the body of Christ.

I get a position, a placing. I'm planted into the body of Christ. But that isn't all.

What's the next phrase? Planted into the body of Christ. Baptized into the body and what? Made to drink of one spirit. Well, get way ahead for tomorrow.

But anyway, it's a wonderful thing when we begin to discover that here we are, a member, a part in the body and our dedication, our dedication in fulfilling the thing that God really wants is the realization that we are a member, hand, leg, ear and eye and nose, a member in the body of Christ, but that along with it we've been made to drink of one spirit, one spirit, and the power by which God works is a two-fold power. There's the inward, made to drink, made to drink. And there is the outward because God has not only put, as it were, the supply of the spirit within, but when the promise of the Father came, the Holy Spirit came down as an anointing upon this whole body.

And the Holy Spirit has been poured out. Now, the tragedy of tragedies is that people, somehow, have thought that it takes an awful long time to get through to the appropriation of all these that God has made real and complete. And would I shock you if I say that what I see happening more and more, I don't think that it's a full apprehension of it all, but I believe that God is doing some rather quick work today and is showing us that an individual who is rightly instructed in the Holy Spirit bringing illumination can come through with some full understanding and very quickly begin to just sort of be planted in the body and know the anointing of the Lord and good drink from God's own life.

And Lord, I thought that used to take ten years or twenty. Like one dear pastor said, well, if this could all happen, I mean, if God, if you can come to awareness of your member in the body and the anointing is there, if you can all do that in one Sunday, what would you tell them from then on? Can I say to you this morning, brothers, sisters, we've spent so long getting to the gate where we could begin. We've been fumbling the fundamentals so long that now it's time, let us not lay all these foundational things, but now let us go on.

This is pretty big stretching for me because I've enjoyed taking people, at least, you know, every six months through anew, you see. And I'm not saying that you can understand it all or that you apprehend the fullness of it. I'm not saying that.

But I am saying, I'm saying that all of this is very elementary. Did you hear me? It's the ABCs. I used to think that when someone had something of the anointing and the Spirit of God came within, that they

really measured up to a high mark and they'd arrived.

And then the Lord said, they've arrived at the gate. It's not because they are spiritual. It's to help them become spiritual.

You see? Just because someone may have the anointing of the Lord come upon them and they burst forth in a heavenly language and praying unto the Lord, I'd say, Lord, Lord, that's wonderful. They haven't arrived at anything but the gate. You see, our problem as fundamentalists is we'd look at some folk who we thought they had arrived at some great spiritual experience, and then we'd see all their babyhood elements and all these things come out, and we'd say, Lord, that's a disappointment.

They haven't arrived at much. Really? Lord, how am I getting off on all this so far? Well, we had a young fellow. He was in a conference some months ago.

The Lord brought him into the meeting. It was in a hotel ballroom. He slipped in after the service.

He walked up and he said, my, all these people seem to love the Lord. They're so joyous. What is this all about? I've never been in anything like it before.

The leader turned to him and he said, well, we're just people of the Lord who've come to discover that we're one body in the Lord and we love Him. Do you know the Lord? No, he said, but I'd sure like to. So in a few minutes, after just a bit of instruction, they led him to the Lord.

He bowed his head and said, oh, God, I knew there was something. I just give my life to You. I trust Jesus.

I wasn't there. I'd gone up to my room. There were three or four of us.

He stayed around. He came to such a realization of knowing the Lord Jesus. His life was just, well, you could just see the difference of countenance, they said.

And five minutes later, the brother said, you know, would you like to have the fullness of the Spirit in your life and have God's anointing come upon you so that you can be a real witness and you can really know how to walk a dedicated life? He said, I want all there is. So ten minutes after he'd been saved, when the brothers laid hands on him, the Holy Spirit so sweetly came upon him without any instruction or anything. He just began to magnify the Lord in another language.

I've been seeing this happen so often in the last few months. I began to say, Lord, what are you trying to get through to me about? And he just seemed to say, we've gotten things so separated so long. One year here, five years later here, ten years here.

The Lord says, no, I'll give you 15 minutes. I'm trying to stretch this this morning. I've had some real stretching.

I'm not saying that that dear fellow knew all that really was involved when Jesus died and he died in him. He'll discover that, but the Lord will take him back for another look. Someday he'll discover maybe in a new way what it is to live by the life of the Lord.

He'll look back and say, oh, that's what resurrection means. I'm living by his life. You see? If you knew how this crossed up some of the things I've taught through the years, you'd shout hallelujah about now.

But I am convinced God is doing something in our hour that's beyond our explaining. What I'm trying to say is basically this. God sees us complete in who? In Christ.

When? When's the now? The moment a little babe lifts Abba Father and says, Dada! God sees. That's right. Complete in who? You've all said that, but you didn't believe it.

We've got to take some time and work. I'm not saying that this whole total thing of dedication and all is worked out just in 15 minutes. But I'll tell you, there's a reason why we've fumbled along with fundamental things so long and we've not brought people on to the fuller thing that God is after.

Well, first half hour's gone. We haven't started. But anyway, do you see this morning that there is an inward a drinking, made to drink of one's spirit? And this is God's qualifying, the inward life character developing within us, the inward strength, you see? But when the spirit is outpoured, outpoured, it is something of God positioning.

Tomorrow we're going to see that position and anointing go together and we're going to see how the inward, inward strengthening, the inward might that God gives as the Spirit of God fills and controls the life within. But all of dedication, all of dedication comes to its fulfillment in the individual as we get into position and we learn the power that God's made available. There's two lovely words for power or authority.

One is ecstasy. It's the outward thing. And the other is dunamis, which is the inward.

Well, you know where we're headed. But let's get back today, see if we can't labor and make it a little harder to get into it, huh? Complete in Christ. Well, let's take three different aspects in which the proving comes about.

First of all, there's the promise that He gives. Second, there's the proving. And thirdly, there's the entering into the possessing.

I do believe that as we begin to come into some renewed knowledge and our longing is more and more to know a real dedication unto the Lord, we get a hold of the blessedness of some of the promise that God has made. And wouldn't it be wonderful if just in giving us the promise we could automatically possess? I'm afraid far too many folk have got the promise and the possessing mixed up. As one of my friends says, he sings it so often, every promise in the book is mine.

But how about the reality of the promise really being brought out? Really possessing the reality of it. Take a couple examples. Look at the life of Abram for a moment.

We'll not spend much time. One day when God brought Abram out of Chaldea, He gave him the promise. He said, I'm going to make a father of you.

You will have a family that will number the stars of the sky and the sand of the seashore. Oh, how Abraham was thrilled with the promise that God had made. How long did it take before he came into the possessing of it? It was a long period of proving, wasn't it? The promise had been made.

Abram tried to help God all this long period of proving. And finally, through Isaac, he comes to possess a son and just about the time that you think a family is going to come from Isaac, he says to Abraham, now I want you to give Isaac to me. Is this approving? Is this approving? The Lord.

How are you going to fulfill your promise? Just kill him and prove me. Who gets proved? Did you hear me now? Prove me, God. You see, there's this simple obedience.

He says, Surrender, yield Isaac. The Lord. Don't worry about my part, just prove me.

See what I do. Go ahead, kill Isaac. But how are you going to do it? He brings it right to the brink, as it were.

Prove me. And of course, in the proving of him, we get proved. We have a better example of it in the history of God's people, Israel.

Turn to Deuteronomy, chapter 6. Verse 1, Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess. He's giving them a promise. The promise is that he's going to give them a land to possess.

He says, I have brought you out, and put it to what? Bring you in. Brought you out of bondage, brought you out of slavery, out of Egypt, as it were. You present, you give yourself to me.

I will bring you in. I will bring you in. Read on with me.

That thou mightest, verse 2, fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I commanded thee, that thou and thy son and thy sons' sons, all the days of thy life, that thy days may be prolonged. Fear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. So, in the process now of the promise, and bringing them into the possession, why can't God just immediately let you possess a thing? What really is involved? God says, I'm going to give you this, and then immediately he gives it.

I believe it's a law in human nature that you cannot give things, certain things to individuals, without hurting them. Except they be prepared, the heart be proved. And I think we get that in the next verse here.

Verse 4, Hear, O Lord, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. So, you see, the proving that takes place right in here is the taking of a new heart and making it wholehearted before the Lord. How many of you know that when you were redeemed, he gave you a new heart? But there's a vast difference between a new heart and a wholeheartedness.

Oh, the fickleness of a heart that's never been proved. It's never really been through the testing, you see. The fickleness of it.

You can stand and look over, say, praise the Lord, that's what I want. Lord, I want to go. I want all that you have.

And I believe that in the midst of this, God's desire was not so much just to give them a land. The land is incidental. He was wanting in the land to give them himself.

When they got into the land, what did they do after another generation got in and took and possessed the land, so to speak? They used the land for themselves, for their own interests. It wasn't that God had been able to really prove in this place the proving of their heart. The land was so good that over a period of 490

years, they failed to let it lie idle.

Seventy sabbaths. Every seventh year was a sabbath unto the Lord. Oh, the land was so good.

It was so wonderful. And they used it for whom? For themselves, without any carefulness. They were in the proving, you see.

And so the Lord allowed the northern Babylonians, the Assyrians to sweep in and took them into captivity. How long were they carried away before Cyrus the king was finally allowing them to come back? Seventy years. And I'd have you keep your finger in Deuteronomy now, but just go over for a moment to Jeremiah 29.

Verse 10, For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this..." God was going to bring them into the place, to the place that He wanted them, where they could reach fulfillment. To the place. "...For I know the thought..." Verse 11, "...for I know the thought that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Oh, the proving work, then, is to develop a wholeheartedness within us. Can I just gently say something to you this morning? I know the mentality of a lot of good fundamental people is, well, praise the Lord, I want everything that He wants for me. And if He wants to give it, I'm willing to take it.

That sounds so spiritual. I've got news for you. You know where you're sitting? You know where you're stalled? Right here.

Thank you, Lord, for the promise. There is something that God requires about the wholeheartedness within our life. Lord, my dedication unto you, my dedication for the full thing that you want, is that my face is set, and I learn to live in my will.

I want to give a message sometime on what it means to live in the will. I'm convinced that the great majority of God's children live in the fickleness of their feelings. One day I feel up, and the next day my feelings are something else.

How many of you have discovered the fickleness of your feelings? Well, you can go to a meeting, and you can get all stirred up and inspired, and you say, I will serve the Lord. Your will acts while you're there. But three hours later, you're away from the climate and away from everything, and the fickleness of your feelings have come in.

And your will is a plaything of your feelings. Anybody know what I'm trying to say? I've come to hate my feelings, to hate the fickleness of it. You see? I think there are others who live in their reasonings all the time.

When they're in the bright light of a good meeting, and they see things clearly, they say, praise the Lord, I will do that. How many of you know three hours later, when you get out from the light, where it's so bright, and you start reasoning, reasoning. You know what I mean? Reasoning.

Then your will becomes subject to your what? Reasoning. Well, maybe it is kind of foolish to be so wholehearted. Maybe God doesn't want all that really, you see? And once again, my will gets taken captive by my reasoning.

Oh, I pray, I don't want to get into this now, but anyway, I pray, Lord, help us to know what it is to set our will. Now, the will doesn't perform. Paul says, for me, the will is present.

Thank you, Lord, you do the performing. But for me, the will is what? Present. And I think it's good.

I hope we can all affirm it this morning and say, Lord, I will be proved. I will have my heart, my wholeheartedness, brought to real proving. I want today to tell you, listen to me when I'm strong, not when I'm weaker now.

Listen this morning. I will that you shall prove and work all around the roots of my heart and tell it's a heart that's proved. And I set my faith.

I will, dear Lord, that the proving shall bring about the possessing. You've brought me out to bring me in. But you'll never get in with the dilatory, well, I'm willing if the Lord is.

You'll never get there. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It's a press.

Everything, everything will move into hindering forth. And it's this proving area, right here, the promise. Oh, so many of God's children think they have the possession because they have the promise.

As Brother Sparks used to say, we have the knowledge, but we don't live in the good of the reality of what we know. Well, back to Deuteronomy again. Chapter 6, verse 15.

For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you. Lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God.

Now, let's just stop for a little bit and ask the question. If God has made a promise and we're proving what is the will, the good, the perfect, the thing that God wants. If we're proving the good, acceptable and perfect will.

He's made a promise to Israel. I've brought you out to bring you in. He made a promise to Abram.

We're going to see the promises that have been made to us. Here's the issue now. How in the proving do we slip away from proving to tempting? What is the difference between proving and tempting? He said here that they tempted.

What's the difference? Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God as ye tempted him in Massa. Ye shall diligently keep the commandment of the Lord your God in his testimonies and his statutes which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore unto thy father.

And so forth. All right? We'll just be open a little bit. When does my proving God? He says prove me.

Prove me. But when does it slip over into tempting God? I need help. Who will help me? Have you considered it? He wants us to prove.

But when does it become a tempting of God? When we arrange the circumstances. I think you're all pointing and I think some of the statements have been very close. I found a brother's definition of tempting God and I share it with you.

I'm not wholly satisfied but it's the best I've found. We're learning, you understand, and trying to improve all the time. I think that you might consider that tempting God is asking a sign from God that's greater than he is pleased or willing to give.

Tempting God is requiring or demanding a sign from God. Greater than he is pleased or willing to give. He says here ye tempted me.

Well, turn to Psalm 78 for a moment. Can you see I'm not wanting to just get some knowledge but we need the practicality of getting a hold of this that it can be a principle working. You see, can I illustrate? You can't be a dedicated person but what you need all around you, you say, Lord, with all this desperate need and the blindness and the whole world system crowding in, Lord, you want somebody who will dare to believe and dare to take and dare to stand for you.

And sometimes as I have started to get into my reasoning, I said, Lord, this just, it seems to me that you want somebody who won't limit you but will be able to take and claim and whose dedication will be more all out than poor little me. I think you want to expand. I get almost to the place where I want to pull some great thing out of the sky, some real evidence for God's glory.

You understand? Well, in Psalm 78, verse 41, Psalm 78, did I say 76? Oh, Psalm 78, verse 41 says, yea, they turned back and tempted God and limited the Holy One of Israel. They limited Him. They tempted Him.

Read verse 18 now. Well, let's go back to verse 17. 78, 17.

And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness, and they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God. They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? I wish I could put it in the Spirit.

I think they said it. Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, verse 20, He smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? Can He provide flesh for His people? Therefore the Lord heard this and was wrought.

So a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel, because they believed not in God and trusted not in His salvation, requiring a sign from God that's greater than He is willing or pleased to give. Well, maybe that doesn't wholly satisfy us yet. Lord, what is a sign that's greater than? Now, here is a poor fellow by the name of, who was Gideon? Do you remember Gideon? And you know the fleeces of Gideon? Lord, how can I know that you're going to be with me? Lord, let the fleece be dry and wet all around.

I wonder if you can see in this that after Gideon got the answer to it, he still had to what? Still had to believe God. That's the problem with signs, because you wonder if you interpreted it right. You still have to believe.

So what did he do? Lord, it could have happened that way. How many have ever been through that? It just could have happened. So he reverses it.

Make the fleece wet and dry all around. Lord, you can't funnel all the rain down. And what happened? I think God must have been pleased.

This is a good sign. I don't know that it's the proper way, but at least I don't think he was tempting God. I think that at the root of all of this, it's the Spirit with which you approach the Lord.

I think God will be very patient with our reasonings to a point. Lord, I don't really know that you're sending me out against all this mighty number. I think I can sense that there's times when questioning is legitimate.

Is that the right word? You see what I'm trying to say? Lord, you know there's more at stake than just me. I've thought so many times, Lord, I'd go out. There's no problem, but here's all these hundreds of others that are alive.

If I get killed, that's all right, but what about the thousands of others that are involved? What about your name and your glory? And I think this kind of a come, let us reason together, sayeth the Lord. Do you follow what I'm trying to say? Come, let us reason together. And I don't know, but it doesn't seem like this was too great a sign.

It's what it was. Lord, let this fleece, let it be dry or let it be wet. But after it was all over with, he still had to what? He still had to believe.

It seems to me, in finality then, that the spirit in which you approach the Lord is either a murmuring, a complaining, or God is very severe toward a rebellious sort of a spirit. He will be very patient long as it's a questioning. Lord, I just want to be sure I heard you right.

You see? I don't think we're tempting at this point. Huh. I know God caused the water to come out of that rock, they said.

But can God, look at this wilderness. Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Who does he think he is? I mean, can you see the spirit of it? Oh, watch your spirit. Be careful about your spirit.

I believe God is not only trying to, as it were, deal in the transforming work of the soul, bring our mind into renewing, renewed knowledge. But God, in the proving of our heart, gets right down to the very innermost, the proving of our spirit, the hidden man within the heart. How many of you have been really pressed into a place where everything was going wrong? You've preached and told everybody else how to do and what to do and all the rest.

And then he brings you right to the brink. And, of course, you know better, doctrinally, than to ever put it in words. But your spirit begins to... Am I the only one? I never voice it.

But my spirit within has gotten so close sometimes to saying, Lord, I don't know about this. And then to quickly recognize. And I think this is the awe, the reverence with which our spirit has to say as Ezekiel did, Lord, thou knowest.

I don't know. Lucifer's heart was lifted up. The spirit full of pride, you see.

And it's right at this point. So, there is that rashness that comes out of a moment where the spirit is wrong. It's not just something of our reasoning, but our spirit's wrong.

And then the brashness with which one speaks. Asking something greater as a sign than God is willing to give. It's said there in Deuteronomy, you remember, as they did at Massa.

As they did at Massa. Turn back to Exodus 17 for a moment. Now you recall that God has led the people out of Egypt.

They've crossed through by a miraculous holding back of the Red Sea. And here they come to the very first place. They pitch their tent at Rephidim.

Verse 1, And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin after their journeys according to the commandment of the Lord and pitched in Rephidim. I want to ask you a question. At this point, were they there in the will of God? Had God led them to Rephidim? Were they there according to His will? Yes, they were.

He'd gotten them through. Lord, you got us here. Well, then the next statement seems strange, doesn't it? And there was no water for the people to drink.

Why would the Lord lead them into a place where there was no water? You see, we started out in a mentality that said you come to know the Lord and everything's going to be all right from then on. And let me say that's true. But I need a renewing of my knowledge.

Right? Right, yeah. They were in God's will, the very center of it. How can I be in the center of God's will and come to a no water situation? Lord, this can't be.

And the first opportunity the enemy is to say, huh, you sure missed God's will. Because you surely wouldn't have a no water situation. No job.

No money. No friends. Nobody understands.

Some place I must have missed your will. No. He's just taken you into the first chapter.

What is it? I want to prove to you that you'll get through this wilderness and it'll be by me as the supply. We're getting on to what we need to get into tomorrow, you see. The whole of our dedication is not seeing what needs to be done and rolling up our sleeves and say, get out of the way.

Here I come. Because what God's end is to be must be done by His means. And so the first blessed part of the proving is no water in the will of God.

Don't accept the enemy's curve at this moment. He'll do it every time. Get you to imagine that just because a difficulty comes, you must have missed the will of God.

Wherefore, verse 2, the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water and the people murmured against Moses. I wondered why you could say they were tempting.

And they said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? I think I see a wrong spirit in it, don't you? Lord, you brought us out to what? Kill us? They had not really understood the claiming of the promise. He brought us out to bring us in. Their spirit was wrong.

And Moses cried unto the Lord saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people and take with thee of the elders of Israel and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb.

And thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord saying, Is the Lord among us or not? Well, my watch has runaways again.

But we'll go on. Would you ask the Lord this morning, if nothing else, would you ask Him this morning how to make real to you that He wants us to prove Him? He wants us to step out. He wants us, as it were, to take a promise.

How many of you know you can play it safe? You can play it safe. You can stay right back here and say, If I don't have any promises, I'll have no proving. If the Lord's willing, I'll take one.

It's a lot easier to play it safe. Yet I'm not sure it's easier because you sit and stew with everybody else who's going on. You try to explain their foolishness so you can justify yourself.

This doesn't sound like the Vern I used to know. But I'm just getting so fed up and so weary of folk who are settling down on the sidelines and criticizing everybody. I just get more like Peter all the time.

I'm saying, Dear Lord, get some folk out of the boat. Did I hear you say, Come, Lord? You can play the cautious eleven who sit in the boat. But Peter says, Lord, bid me come unto thee.

And he walks on the water. And who had something to talk about that day? Huh? The cautious eleven? Wasn't that something what Peter did? He almost went down. But I can hear Peter saying, Oh, how wonderful to understand the provision and the undergirding.

And hear the Lord say, Come. Well, don't let me try to push anybody out, dear Lord. I pushed people out of the boat.

They drowned. I can't swim either. But I wrecked on you, Lord.

I wrecked on you. You said, Come. And here I come.

Lord, prove my heart. I can't get this across. But I pray this morning.

Somehow God will break through to us. And he'll get our ear. And it'll hear him saying, Come, Peter.

Come, Peter. You've been living cautiously long. Now, I'm for caution.

You know that. Of a certain kind. But God wants to enlarge.

And God wants to prove our heart and give an opportunity for us not only to have a promise box, but a heart that's been proved and God's prepared that he might bring some people into. And this is what we're after when we get to this positioning and this entering in to what the land represented, where God could fulfill through Israel what he wanted. And guess what's going to happen when he gets you into his body.

You're in, but you're rightly related. You know the functioning and the placing and all that's involved. Oh, I get excited.

Lord, it's getting better. Father, we thank you this morning. We want a dedication that's really stretched.

And we want, dear Lord, the renewed knowledge. We've all run out to work. We've run out with zeal.

We've wanted to serve, but oh, thank you, Lord, that there's a renewing of our mind that will bring us into the real proving of you, that we can come through in the end and say the Lord was our rock. And we learned what it was to live by the drink, the flow that came. And we learned that he could set a table in the wilderness, the manna fell every day.

Oh, I claim this morning you'll teach us. It's such a very sensitive thing, Lord. Only you can teach us.

When we get beyond the proving of you to the tempting, make it real for my brothers and sisters. But oh, I thank you, Lord, there's something of the call of the Spirit. You put the press within our hearts.

We've been in passivity. We've been sitting on the sidelines long enough and our heart reaches out and we say, draw me and I will run after thee. Call me, Lord, and I will step out of my little boat.

Thank you, Lord, I believe you to do it this morning that our dedication might come into the fulfillment, the thing that you really desire. Thank you, Lord, we believe you to do this. In each of our hearts, in Jesus' name, amen, amen.

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