

# Divine Counterparts

by Devern Fromke

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and balancing the Divine Counterparts of rescue and race, endurance and enjoyment, in the Christian life.*

**Duration:** 1:15:55

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of enlarging our window and finding balance in our lives. He uses the analogy of a bird with a weak wing flying in circles and people walking in circles when they're lost in the forest due to one leg being shorter. The speaker emphasizes the importance of both the rescue and the race in our spiritual journey, referring to the rescue as the salvation and the race as the fulfillment of our purpose. He also mentions the need to endure and enjoy in our lives, and how only God can meet those needs. The sermon references verses from the Bible, including Hebrews 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 9, to support these concepts.

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## Transcript

I'm so thankful to the Lord for your open hearts. It's a very wonderful group to speak to. I confess last afternoon, I wasn't sure I was getting through, but from the comments and the way you've been sharing with me, I thank the Lord for his speaking and opening your heart to receive my burden.

I was saying yesterday, just by way of review, I know there are some who've come in who are not here yesterday, that this universe is God designed and planned, is person centered. And out of his personhood, all the principles that govern follow. And because these principles are wonderful, they are going to fulfill the purpose that God has had.

I need to say to you that we who speak and are working together have a confidence in one another. I'm so glad to come to a group like this because I know I'm not alone. I have brothers we've known for years.

And if I were a little bit off or something needed adjustment, I know they would come to me. We just sort of have a common understanding. We don't correct from the pulpit, but we come to one another.

And that's a confidence you can have. And it's a confidence that I have because we're not all knowing, we're not all understanding, and we believe that God can help us adjust. So if something does not, you know, from service to service, if there seems to be a little bit of difference and emphasis and so forth, we

trust that God is speaking and that he will work.

I got a lot to cover this afternoon and we've got a lot of time, so hang on. Turn to Hebrews chapter 12, if you will, please. Hebrews chapter 12, we bow for a moment, Father, and we acknowledge that you are the one who speaks to our hearts.

The voice of a man may come forth, but we pray that it will be the voice of the Lord portioning out to each one something that can be encouraging, instructing, edifying, adjusting, you know us this afternoon. And I repeat once again, Lord, I look to you in helplessness, but in the confidence that you will speak to your people. So we thank you in this in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. One of the things that's been very helpful, which will follow along in what we were saying yesterday, is the fact that God has a way of completing, putting things together that always need to be together.

I think I'll use as a title this afternoon, Divine Completions, Divine Counterparts, things that God puts together that must never be separated. We get a little picture of this. Thank you.

I need some further help. I dropped my voice yesterday, and if I do, somebody in the back, just kind of wave your hand. Will you do that if I can see you? Thank you.

Way back there, sister. You be my waver. I have a tendency to drop my voice, but I want to be understood and thank you for your help.

Divine Counterparts, we're going to look into a portion of the word here in chapter 12 and see some things that God puts together that I believe we need to keep together. Beginning to read, verse one, wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Need a little background before I introduce the first.

It's interesting that when God placed Adam in the garden, I believe he had a wonderful purpose that he was going to work out through Adam as the progenitor. In some ways, I like to picture the fact that Adam stood at the gateway of choice. Adam could give himself to the purpose that God had to work out through him because God is who he is.

He allowed him to make choice, we call it free moral agency, and we know that Adam made a choice to go his own way. But not only did Adam turn to his own way, but it says all we like Adam or all like we like sheep have turned to our own way. So Adam could have given himself to fulfill the purpose of God, but he turned to go his own way.

Going to labor this. You've seen it before. In due time, God devises a way by which through the work of the cross, he can rescue man, bring him from his fallen condition and bring him onto the race course.

I bring this up because the first counterpart we're going to look at is what we call the rescue and the race. Man in his fallen condition here needs to be redeemed, rescued and brought back to the line of purpose so that he can begin again to fulfill that which God planned. It is very important then to remember that man needs rescue, but he also needs to run the race of life.

I have met many people through the years who assume that they can run the race, fulfill and accomplish that which God wanted, but they don't realize that first they have to be rescued. Now, may I say only Adam started here. We all start down here in our fallen condition.

We start here and God, through the work of the Lord Jesus and all the aspects, many aspects of the rescue he redeems, he brings us out of our fallen condition that we might move to the race course in order to. Fulfill. The purpose of God.

So the first thing we get a hold of, then is, he says, we run the race, you can't run the race until you've been rescued. Amen. Then I need to acquaint you with my peculiarity.

Forgot yesterday when I want you to talk back to me, I put my hand to my ear and you say, oh, me or oh, my or something. Thank you. We recognize that it's impossible to run the race until you have been rescued and brought to the race course.

But my quarrel with so many people is they want to be rescued, but not run the race. So easy to settle down here and say, thank you, Lord. I'm saved.

Got me out of my condition. Now, I don't want to make this too simple because in this whole rescue operation, there are so many things we receive forgiveness, reconciliation and all the aspects of justification, sanctification. There's a lot of things.

And in some ways, we are always reckoning back on the cross, always reckoning on a deeper rescue work in our life. So we never get through that. But in another way, once we reach the race course, we're ready to run.

We're going to see a little bit later that this is by the grace of God. A little bit later, we're going to see there's another kind of grace that's always available in fulfilling the race course. But the first rescue, then the first is two things, rescue and race.

I was in Japan a number of years ago. Lovely brother from Finland was my interpreter for four days. You know, it was such a shock to him that God had a twofold picture.

He said, I always just thought it was like this. And one day I'd run the race and get to heaven. Well, for four days, every time he'd interpret, he'd say, now let me give them my new revelation.

I just discovered both the rescue and the race. Many of God's children have never realized that while the rescue is all important, even more important is fulfilling the race. So this is why I believe Paul is saying here.

We read in that last part of verse one. And let us run with patience the race that is set before us. You go back to First Corinthians, chapter nine, where Paul says we all run in a race.

There's a prize to win. But I want to quickly move on because there's another counterpart that I think is interesting. He says, verse two, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I knew this verse and pondered it many times before I came to realize that here's another something that I believe needs to be cleared for us. My first 30, 35 years of ministry, I emphasized endure. In fact, as I saw

it on almost every page in the Bible, if you are going to really run and finish the race as good soldiers, you must learn to endure.

And I see it all over because it's a very important thing that in our persevering, our endurance, we come to recognize the disciplines, the Holy Spirit works in our life. It gives us perseverance, the endurance. So I would have to say that my early ministry was pretty much with one emphasis, endure.

And then one day God opened, he spoke to me and he said, it would be all right to enjoy me. And I almost said, I rebuke you, devil. That can't be.

Enjoy. But, you know, it didn't take long before God began to open things up. And I saw Genesis right on through.

Adam was in a garden. He said, Adam, all these trees you can eat from, you know, eating is enjoyable. We've been kind of, haven't we? And I began to see and enjoy every place I turned, the enjoyment of the Lord.

But it was so foreign to me that I didn't feel easy about it. I just honestly felt like, no, I'm not really spiritual unless I'm enduring. Do I have any company? Not many.

Anyway, I want you to know that for quite a period, God began to develop this whole enjoyment side because I was so completely lopsided. I've been told that when one bird, when the bird has one weak wing, it flies in circles. And I've also been told that the reason people walk in circles when they're lost in the forest is because sometimes one leg is shorter.

Very easy to go round and round and round and round until God builds the divine balance into our life. And my plea for us this afternoon, and you're catching already the fact that when God joins together, let no man put asunder. Both the rescue and the race are necessary.

Both of them have their divine place in the divine economy. And the same thing is true with enduring or enjoying. Now, I recognize that because I saw so many people over here who had gotten into the ditch and they were in a happiness cult.

So the only thing in life was being happy, and because they were in the ditch over here, I had my own ditch. I had the suffering cult. You're going to really make it through.

It's all suffering. Now, either wrong, either ditch, either emphasis. So when we react, we usually overreact toward the ditches, don't we? You see the extreme.

But God, when he has his way in working in our lives, God is going to bring the proper enduring as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and the enjoyment that's involved. And we don't need to worry about the ditches if we are looking unto Jesus. Now, look at the principle, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

I just have such confidence this afternoon that if I am really keeping my eyes focused. Yesterday, we talked about being principle centered and a lot of folk are principle centered. They're emphasizing only the principles without realizing that God always is the one who governs.

That is the one who controls every principle. So somebody here this afternoon is saying, Lord, maybe I need balance. Maybe I need to enjoy some more.

Don't take my word. Ask the Lord what he wants to do in balancing out your life. Do I need to enjoy more? I don't think too much.

Many of us need to endure a little bit more. You follow? Only God, only God can meet that need in your life. You know, I've been interested in the way God begins to develop once you see a principle and it just begins to expand and unfold.

I remember a number of years ago when we were in A.C. Switzerland. One afternoon, Brother Sparks walked into the fellowship to speak at the meeting place and he looked over the group and he said, what is glory? Well, I thought it was a rhetorical question. All of us did.

So we waited for him to tell us, but he didn't. He waited. So I thought, well, maybe he wants an answer.

And I thought, glory, that's some gigantic, stupendous, colossal, enormous unveiling of the character of God. And it was all my my cogs were working. I didn't say anything, I'm thankful.

And when nobody was responding, he finally said, give you one word, glory is satisfaction. That wasn't too meaningful to me at that time. But in the years that have followed, I've come more and more to appreciate that when all things come to the finality and the fullness that God has planned, all of it represents the glory that will bring satisfaction to his own heart.

But the unique thing about this is God could never be satisfied just having things alone. That's why the father from the beginning. He longs and plans to have a vast family, all of them conform to the image of his lovely son.

And I believe that when that finality comes, many membered family, all of them conform to the likeness and image of the Lord Jesus, that which was which was in his heart. I believe it will bring a great sense of satisfaction. And that brought me to recognize that satisfaction is not something you can experience alone.

Enjoyment always requires mutuality, others involved. Let me illustrate. Many years before I was married, I was married at 33 and a half and I traveled the country, always enjoying various drove most of the time over 100 times to the West Coast.

And I go through a lot of areas and always think, oh, my mother would like that. She loved scenery. She loved new places.

I waited for the time that I could bring her to see it because I couldn't enjoy it by myself. That to me is a built in mutuality that God has placed within us. You cannot to this day when I'm in the midst of some enjoyment of something.

Oh, so and so we're here. So and so we're here. So and so we're here.

And so I was privileged to take mother many places, Canada and other trips we were taken. Oh, how she enjoyed it. I look enjoying it, mother, because she enjoyed it.

I enjoyed it. Do you think that might be something in the heart of God? Are you enjoying he wants to bring us? I believe to the enjoying of all that there is. And in that enjoyment, there comes a satisfaction back to him.

Well, that's been growing in my heart ever since, because I began to realize how much of the time my emphasis has been kind of one short leg going round and around and enduring. And all I can pray this afternoon is that none of you will get a hold of one principle, but you'll let God develop both wings in your bird. Amen.

Both enduring, both enjoying, because I believe that brings us the place where we can run the race and fulfill. I just think, you know, since I got a hold of some enjoyment, I've been interested. How many folk come and say you enjoy being a Christian, don't you? I do.

It's not hard. All the time, you know, there are times when you come back to work on this wing a little bit. There's some enduring.

But if God can so work in our life, I am convinced he will make us a lovely, even here, a lovely specimen, a lovely example of two things. Counterparts that most must be working in our life. Well, we need to move on.

Verse three. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds, you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and you forgot the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he childtrains, he chastens, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening or child training, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening or no child training for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Let me just take a moment to introduce our next counterpart.

I think Paul is saying now for those who are going to make any progress in the race course and fulfilling the thing God wants, that there is a need for child training. Chastening is kind of hard. Let's just call it child training.

The disciplining that comes, the training in our life that is necessary, that which God is continually doing by the Holy Spirit to bring us to maturity. But along with that, there is another counterpart that we need to recognize. Let me lay a little background now before I fill this one in.

If I understand the word of God, there is a distinction between those who are children, techons, little ones, and those who are sons, kios, the Greek word. This word is very descriptive because I believe that when we are redeemed, God brings us back to the race course. In one sense, as we reach this place, we are children, little techons, just learning the way of the Lord.

But God wants, by the spirit of adoption working in our lives, to bring us to a fuller maturity. One of the problems we run into when you read this is that we have a conception of what adoption is that is strictly

Western, not necessarily biblical. If I understand the biblical conception of adoption, when we are born into the family, we have a relationship with Him.

We are a technon. We are a child. As we learn to walk and be led by the spirit of God and follow into maturity, that sonship grows and develops in our life, and we come into adoption as the spirit of adoption works.

Our Western conception is you go to an adoption place and you bring somebody into the family. That is not biblical adoption. Biblical adoption is not a matter of relationship, but it is a matter of positioning.

Let me illustrate. Greece, Rome, Hebrew, a child would be born into a family. That father would often select a noble pedagogue, sometimes a slave that had come from a very wonderful place who had lots of ability, and put that little child under the tutelage.

Of a pedagogue, a child trainer, a teacher, and it was the purpose of that pedagogue to train that little child in the ways of the father to embrace the spirit, the mind, the purpose to bring that child to the place where he could finally be placed in his fuller sonship rights. A son, yes, but the spirit of the pedagogue working in that life was to bring that little one to the place where finally could be placed. Interesting, isn't it? Isaiah said unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is. And who ever comes to this place and upon his shoulder, the government unto us a child is born unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder. So there is something of preparation in this whole thing we call the adoption.

And I just plead with this now. This is not mine. You can look in the Schofield footnotes and other places and you can recognize they say that relationship into the family as a child, but positioning into the maturity that comes in adoption is one thing.

So here we have the two words. Little Technon, the word for a child. Heos, H-U-I-O-S, the word for son.

The word adoption in the Greek is Theothecia. I don't know much Greek, but I know a couple of words. Theothecia, it is son placing.

What would happen? The time would come when this child had reached the place under the tutelage. The pedagogue had been working in the life. The whole family, everyone would be gathered into the ceremony and the little child would be brought into the middle.

His robes of childhood would be taken off. The robes of sonship would be placed upon him. It was the placing, the Theothecia.

And the father would say, this is my beloved son in whom I take great delight. Ever hear that? Someone told me that was a common thing that was said, not just here in the scripture, but it is commonly passed on. Unto us a child is born, a son is given, and now the government shall be upon his shoulder.

God is working in your life and my life. And one of the things that he's doing in child training, chastening, disciplining is bring us to the time when suddenly there can be the placing in our life. Someone says if the spirit of adoption is working, that's the pedagogue teaching, training, disciplining, working in our lives.

What is it for? It's unto the placing. His mature sons. I have such a longing for this to be clear in the church today, because so many individuals are thinking, well, one of these days when I get there, I'll get to reign

with the Lord.

Won't it be wonderful? Walking out of a morning service in Oregon years ago, two sweet little sisters were ahead of me in the line. The man who had been speaking that morning was talking about rewards and reigning, heard one of them whisper and said, I can hardly wait. How many cities do you want to reign over? I'll take five.

The other said, well, I could handle two. And I thought to myself, oh, God, I'm so glad you don't hand out reigning without preparation. Without some child training, without some disciplining.

Beloved, all that we're speaking about this afternoon is simply the fact that God wants the disciplining, the child training, that which the spirit of adoption is working in us to bring us finally to the place where there can be the adoption, the full placing in maturity. Questions going to come before we leave. Somebody's going to say, how much adoption can we have now? Let Brother Kong answer that.

I really don't know. But I think I have watched in the lives of some individuals who have gone through the disciplining, the working of God in their lives. And I see God giving more authority.

More discernment. More understanding of his ways. When we come to know his mind, to know his ways, his spirit begins to become our spirit controlling.

I believe there's already some placing that's taking place. One of these days we'll put off this body of flesh. We'll be clothed with our tabernacle from above.

And at that time, probably the full adoption will be manifest. In the meantime, there is the child training and the disciplining that goes on. And I just pray, oh, God, don't let us separate this placing.

This adoption. Don't let us separate this from the child training. Ah, somebody's going to say, thank you, brother.

I'm going home and pray for more child training. More scourging. More discipline.

Let me tell you, that's one thing you don't need to pray for. Why? My loving father says, I love you too much to leave you the way you are. That's why I'm working in your life.

All of this is your, you know, heal marks all along the way. Oh, God, do I have to? No. But there's something that rises in my spirit that says, oh, God, don't let me settle down and be comfortable.

Don't let me resist your disciplining, your child training work. So we have these two counterparts. Well, there are eight or ten.

I'm trying to keep them down to just four or five. Let's read on a little further. Verse 11 now.

You see, if you know this, if you understand that the chastening, the disciplining, child training is unto something, your heart can say, yes, Lord. I kind of think that even our Lord Jesus, who learned obedience by the things that he suffered, he could look down the corridor and say, for the joy that was set before him, he endured. What was the joy that our Lord Jesus saw? What was it that that moved, motivated him to be willing to give himself so fully to the father? I believe in simple terms, it was the joy that would bring to the father.

God wants father pleasers. Father, if you're pleased, if you're satisfied, it is not so much what we get. It is you, please.

If you're pleased, then it brings satisfaction back to me. I need to just insert this because it comes up all the time. A lovely sister, very lovely sister, came last night after the service and she said got a little problem.

Brother Kong so wonderfully talked about us being self-centered and the whole universe revolving around us and our selfishness. And I said, oh, God, I really need to know that kind of working in my life because I'm really selfish. I said, well, she said, then Lance comes along and tells us all that we can get in the inheritance.

And my selfishness goes out the window, she said, can you explain? I said, yes, I can. You see, in God's reckoning, he wants us to understand all our inheritance that's in Christ, all that's been made available in our rescue. And the more he opens our eyes, the spirit of wisdom and revelation, the knowledge we begin to see all that we have as an inheritance in Christ.

I thought Lance so wonderfully explained last night. I want to say, hallelujah, I never realized that I had that kind of inheritance much more than Mrs. Williams got. Is that what her name was? But, you know, Paul prays a little bit further in Ephesians.

He says, I want the eyes of your understanding to be opened to grasp the fact that there's an inheritance that God gets in the saints, his inheritance. So here we have two things. Our inheritance, his inheritance.

Which do you hear the most about today? Ours. And this is not saying it was so it was so Lance will get around his inheritance. I know him well enough.

I just know that we don't need to be worried. God will balance out the whole conference. And I prayed for the little sister and she said, well, I need some help because I sure feel selfish, but I'm sure glad to get more inheritance.

And we all had that feeling. You just hang on. God's going to balance things out for it's over with a man.

Just the way he usually does things. So here we have two things, our inheritance, his inheritance. It's there.

It'll be covered in the script in our in our lessons. So we move on a little bit further. Verse 12.

Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees and make straight paths for your feet. Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men.

And holiness. Without which no man shall see the Lord. And I pondered this, watch this in operation for a long time, and I've come to conclusion that this thing of following peace.

With all men is a wonderful thing, learning to relate, learn to be peaceable, learning to follow peace with all men. Difficulty is that sometimes you're in an office, you're in a world situation where it is very difficult to follow peace. And I think it's it's it's important to recognize here that God adds two things that must always be together.

Somebody says, I can appreciate holiness. God working, this is a reality into my life. I could really be holy if I didn't have to work in that office.

I didn't have to live in that home. I could really be holy if I could get separated in the way from circumstances. But here are two things that are always working.

They require some understanding now, you know, as following peace and holiness. Very difficult. I read the story some years ago.

Of a mother and father who sent their son away from home. He just graduated from high school. He was going to university and reared in a Christian home and a good church.

He was in school for about three months, four months, and. He wrote home and he said, having a good time, lots of friends, enjoying people, want to bring my roommate home for Christmas. I know you'll like her and you can believe mother and dad looked at that word her dad says that's him.

Mother says, no, I can read clearly. It's her and they wondered what has happened to our wonderful son raised with. Suddenly he's come to some Christ and made some decision.

Can it be a her? Can't you see what develops in the home when mother says. We'll just let them come and have peace with all men. And dad out of real.

Background and conviction says holiness, they won't come to my house. So you've got a little conflict between peace and holiness. Now, in our world today, we always play or we just play it safe in situations.

They couldn't understand how this son had been so with the background he had, how could he do this? None of us can understand that young people put on a suit of clothes, take on vocabulary. They perform before us and our sweet little children look wonderful. They're riding the momentum of what they've been in.

Suddenly the reality of what's inside begins to be exposed. So what do we do usually as individuals? Well, I meet folk who say I just always or I never. And when I hear those two words from God's children, it just rings red flags for me.

Somebody says we never go to a family reunion because you don't know our family. They'll be drinking. There'll be a lot of things.

And so we just never go. That's playing it safe, isn't it going to be holy? Then I meet somebody says I always go and we're heading for something. This is something we need to get a hold of because the never and the always is moving by policy.

I don't have to acquire the Lord. Somebody says of the office, I never go to those office parties or, you know, we get so separated and so isolated at times that God can't break through and bring the gospel into a situation. You think you're going to keep peace with everybody? Well, mother and dad were reading one morning this very verse and still struggling.

Do we invite our son home? What do we do when they came to this verse? Which we just read, follow peace with all men, mother shouted, Hallelujah, that's it. Dad, read it again. He said, follow peace with all men and holiness.

What do you do in situations? I'm stretching you now. How many always play it safe? You got a policy. You've got a principle.

How many are never? You play it safe. I'd like to stretch you this afternoon to believe that God could move you into a family reunion and give you opportunity to give a testimony for him and people who thought you were strange and queer. Suddenly God would see something of reality and they'd see something.

Say they're not so bad after all, but all they know is you see from a distance. One of the most difficult things. Is to follow peace and be involved.

With people, I much prefer separation, but at the same time, there's a separation that comes. We were speaking about yesterday. And holiness, if you get what I'm after this afternoon, you'll realize how easy it is for us to live in our principles, in our policy.

I never or I always. And God is always crowding us to himself. Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, do you want me in that situation? Could I be your testimony? Some focus so separated in our in our religious world today, they don't get involved.

They don't they don't touch. How do you know I've been in that safe place a lot of the time until God shakes and burdens my heart? Well, it's kind of in passing. You say, what did they do? I'm not going to tell you because you take it as a policy or you get another principle.

And only God can shut you up to himself. What they did was right and it worked out, which is all we're interested in. Well, let's move on just a little bit further.

You know, the picture that I see here looking again now, how a peace with all man and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord looking diligently. Now we started out in verse two, looking unto Jesus. We're person centered, preoccupied with him looking diligently.

Lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up and trouble you and thereby many be defiled. Here's another couplet that needs to always be together. I call it the root and the fruit obvious.

He spoke in an earlier verse up here, the peaceable fruit of righteousness and that fruit that comes out of a life only because there is the root of righteousness. Let me let me illustrate that with a little story. I was in Hagerstown, Maryland a number of years ago in a school, Christian high school teaching one morning.

I think it was Friday. We'd been there five days. The headmaster of the school said we should come into the office after the chapel this morning.

We have a senior boy who's been acting so strangely. We don't know what's happened to him. We found him behind the building smoking this morning.

So out of character, we can't figure out what has happened. So after the morning message, I slipped into the office and he came in in a typical teenager way, slouched down and you could see rebellion and withdrawal all over his face. Didn't say anything.

Headmaster tried to draw him out, get him to speak, wasn't going to. Finally, he blurted out, you'd be angry, too, if you had a father like mine. He said, what do you mean? I know your father.

Explain. He said, well, about a month ago, you see, my dad boards horses for people and the hay mile was full of hay for them. And my pet pigeons were messing up the hay so that they couldn't eat the hay.

And my dad shot all my pigeons. He said last week, my little dog walked down the aisle of the barn. My dad shot my dog.

He said, I have a right to be angry with a father like that, don't I? He'd convinced himself by reasonings that he was justified reacting toward his father and now toward the school. His reasonings were in control. He looked around for some support.

And, you know, when you hear of a father shooting pigeons and he said he could have at least told me I got the pigeons out. He could have told me I'd have got my dog out. You almost want to shoot the father.

Your sympathy goes out. And I listened for a while and finally I said, I think I need to draw a little picture for you. I'd like for you to see something.

You are going to have the privilege of discovering in a new way the enabling grace of God. You see, every one of us who are born of the spirit of God are planted like a tree with roots that can go down to the river of grace. And there are going to be difficult things that will come along in your life, things that you can understand, things that are not fair.

And you'll be offended unless you learn to take the desire and the power of God to forgive your dad for what he did. No way. He said, God has planted you.

You see, the initial saving grace, this grace wherein you stand is like a tree that's planted. You belong to the Lord. You're planted by the river of grace.

Lots of people here today know they're standing in grace, planted, as it were, by the river of grace. One thing to be tree standing in it. It's another thing to know how to appropriate the desire and the power that enables you to fulfill the will of God.

All of life, every one of us, we run the race, are going to learn this. He sat there unmoved and I said, well, let me show you what your tree is going to look like in a few years. Kind of a barren thing.

And your roots are going to like this. Instead of allowing your roots to go down to take desire and power to receive from God the enablement to forgive your father said, I don't justify what your father's done. I don't understand.

I don't think it's right. But your problem isn't your father. It's you facing what God wants.

He gives to every one of us as his children who are planted. He gives the enabling grace. The desire and the power to respond to every life situation, according to the will of God.

So I said, take your choice. You're developing these kind of roots and your life's going to be barren and unfruitful. Well, it scared him.

The good news is, in a couple of minutes, he turned and knelt by the chair and he cried out, oh, God, I don't want that kind of roots. You see, the principle that operates at this point is if we humble ourselves, God gives more grace. Both James and Peter speak of it.

Humble yourself under the hand of God. And the moment he humbled himself, says, God, I don't understand. I was telling him that we learn to cast down reasonings and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Your reasoning says dad was wrong. I'm right. Your reasoning says it wasn't fair.

Shouldn't have done it. All these things. And you're offended.

You continue to be offended until you're willing to humble yourself and say, God, I need to forgive. I can't forgive.

You give the desire. He giveth more grace to the humble. Oh, I'm learning more and more as we move around the critical issues, the pride, the reasonings that come up in the lives of people that keep them from bowing and saying, oh, God, I don't have the desire and power.

Well, I'll give you the good news. Just a couple of minutes. He got up from his knees and he says, yes, I forgive my dad and I'll go home right now and tell him he had the desire and the power to respond according to the will of God.

You know, that began a train of reasoning and thinking in my own heart, because every time you turned around, you find how your reasonings rise up, casting down reasoning, these high thoughts, these things that justify ourselves and excuse. And I began to realize, as I said yesterday, how easy it is to become offended because of things that happen that are unfair. And I'm going to prophesy without any fear this afternoon that everybody here is going to be offended sooner or later, if you haven't already.

How many say already? What do you mean? Somebody's been unfair. Somebody's done something to you and your whole reasoning says they're wrong. I'm right beside the point over and over, week after week.

We deal with individuals that come to realize they might be a tree standing, but they don't know the root life that goes down to the river of grace and takes the desire and the power that God gives. Passes understanding. You know, you see this whole picture of being offended and the world is filled with it today.

Every time you turn around, you find people who are in the church or running with you, going along and you felt like everything was moving and suddenly they're quiet. Suddenly they don't come around. Suddenly they're gone.

You wonder what happened. So easy to be offended. Let me illustrate.

You know, Jesus came along and began to work his ministry while John was finishing his ministry. John had said at one point, he must increase, I must decrease. I don't know if John knew what that meant or what is going to be involved, but he was going to find out shortly because John is in prison.

Little by little, Jesus is increasing and taking over his his disciples and John here is all alone in prison and he starts to reason. Reason, is he really the Christ? Is this really the Messiah? Should we look for someone else? And he sends a couple of his disciples that are with him. Go ask Jesus.

Jesus is confronted. They say, John's wondering, are you really the Christ? He says, go back and tell them the miracles, go back and tell them these things. Then tell them, blessed is he that is not offended in me.

How many think John, in his reasonings, could have said, he's my cousin? How many believe cousins ought to visit cousins in prison? Will you vote for that? They were cousins. No record that Jesus visited John, but I think he should have. Well, maybe.

Except that God's working things out. Here's John about to be offended. Oh, how wonderfully the Lord works.

When there's a willingness to just say, Lord, I cast down reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself. And I don't know if there's someone this afternoon might have slipped in. It's so easy for us to allow things, reasonings, rationalize all of these things.

We need to cast them down. You need to say, God, they were wrong, but that's not the problem right now. What is my spirit? What is my attitude? Do I have roots that can go down to the river of grace? Well, I say that because I won't need that one anymore.

Probably not. Here we are. Issue this afternoon is, is God developing in me a root of righteousness that I might have the fruit of righteousness, he says in this verse, and we want to see it clearly looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God.

Nothing to do with salvation, necessarily fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness bringing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled. Oh, I think I've defiled others, offended, picking up the offense of others. So easy to happen.

Others defiled. But I thank God that there's come a whole new burden in my heart. Lord, I want to know the ability to humble myself under the hand of God, that my roots can go down to the river of grace and you can bring the fruit that comes.

A lot of the religious world today wants the fruit without developing the root. I'd like to claim this, Lord. I've got a verse.

You've got to prove it. You've got to fulfill it. There's the root life that God develops within us as we humble ourselves before him.

How many times have I had someone come to me and say, I've got a verse, a promise, and I'm insisting that God fulfill it. Well, that really sounds spiritual. And I bought it for a long time until I began to realize that it is the Lord himself who quickens a verse and a promise to us.

And he alone who develops the root life within us, it says, oh, God, you could, if this be your mind, this be your heart, if this is something that can work out and the spirit, the humility of your heart allows the roots to go down. God gives desire and the power to respond and then he can bring the fruit. But just claiming the fruits that come without developing the root.

Thank you for being patient. Let me just close with one more little picture this afternoon. I've been amazed through the years to see how God wants to enlarge our window.

Some of you are getting the book, The Larger Window. Let me just say I'm not quite as generous as it may seem. How many of you have seen the advertisement, I bet you can't eat just one potato chip ever go into Meyers and they hand you one great big potato chip and what do you do? Go buy the whole box.

I've discovered that when somebody reads a couple of the stories in The Larger Window, invariably they say, I need a whole carton. You have to go to our printer. They're just amazed at the cartons that people are ordering.

And so I am praying that you can't eat one chip. I'm just, you know, being transparent with you. That when you read, you'll say, oh, there's some answers here.

I give you some of the amazing stories of the last few weeks. It's just been out since April. Folk who said, oh, I bought a whole carton, gave them away and now everybody's buying cartons.

This is what I call a book explosion. And the reason is because the price is down. Two dollars isn't too much for that kind of a book.

If you go to the publisher, the one who distributes it, they think ten dollars is a cheap price, which they're selling them for. But you're on the inside today. Anyway, what I want to get around to is another window.

You know, for years I lived with a touchstone. I had been reared in a background that had a certain concept, a reckoning point in God. And as long as I lived in that, it was kind of a closed box reasoning.

I don't know how to tell you how many times under conviction of sin, I went back to the altar at the close of a meeting and got saved over again and over again and over again until I finally got weary of it and said, Lord, all I need is ten minutes of the end to get right because I can't hold out anyway. Foolish reasoning. But you see, I was starting from a certain concept in God.

Then I discovered one day the grace of God and exploded a whole new box of reasoning. I discovered that God was sovereign and that which had been given to him, he could keep and the grace of God exploded. I moved from my Arminian moral box up to a sovereignty box.

And my whole reckoning in God was that God is sovereign. He's going to work everything out. Only problem is when you follow this to its finality, it often leads to futility, which is what will be, will be.

How many with me now? What will be, will be. You start here with the fact that God has given moral choice, freedom to man, which he did. And you follow this through and you come to humanism, man on the throne.

We have in the religious world today two controlling concepts. If you make this real extreme, you get off in the ditch here. You have the whole Islamic world.

One word, submission, the authority of God, submission, hard, cold submission. You move over here to the Western world and it's man is the master of his own fate. It depends on us.

Both of these are ditches. Now, unfortunately, really fortunately, there are many of God's servants who struggle between this thing of a touchstone of the sovereignty of God or the touchstone of the moral freedom that God gives. And they just sort of finally work their way through a middle zone.

And you ask them, are you a Calvinist or are you Armenian? And they say, well, sort of sort of what sort of both. Anybody with me? Well, years ago, and I've shared this with pastors all over the country, I think it's been a help to them. One day God gave me the larger window.

That's why we started where we were yesterday. And I saw that if you start with a concept or an attribute or a principle in God, is God sovereign? No question. Does God give free moral choice? Absolutely.

What do you do with the two? If you stay in either one of these, you have closed box reasoning. I need to explain that to somebody else. Closed box reasoning.

You start with this as your touchstone. You're going to end with futility. You start with this and you're going to end with man on the throne.

One day when I saw that we were not principle centered, concept centered, we are not centered in either of these. But I moved back to start with a person. And I discovered that my father as a person is the one who can bring both of these into their proper place.

And suddenly it was as though the Holy Spirit said the only safe sovereignty is paternal sovereignty. Let me run that through again. The only safe sovereignty is a father who is sovereign.

He can work with his children. He's sovereign. He can break their arm, their foot.

He's sovereign over them. But what conditions his sovereignty? His paternal nature. It limits.

Is he totally sovereign? Yes, but it limits what sovereignty exercises. I thought, oh, thank God. Paternal sovereignty.

I'm not starting with a concept. I'm not principle centered. I'm person centered, starting with a father who limits himself.

He could. He's limited. I start with the father who exercises freedom, his choice.

But he knows that it's limited morality, limited choice. Well, I'm just dropping this with you this afternoon because it brought such rest from my own heart to say, oh, God, I'm so glad I moved into the larger window. No longer just starting with a concept, an attribute, a principle in God, but starting now with his person.

No wonder Paul said, blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus. And I can look up and I can say, Father, I know your heart is moving, crowding, doing all that you need to do sovereignly. You go so far and you limit.

I know how much freedom you give and then you limit. The only safe is paternal sovereignty and moral paternal morality. Well, that's just the full script added in because I'm trying to say as we close out that time with you, I pray that God will enlarge principles.

We're not playing down. We're not minimizing. But sooner or later, you come to the place where you wonder, am I really? What am I? When I came to recognize some years ago that I was neither a Calvinist nor Armenian, but a paternalist starting a new branch, a new denomination.

Join it. It's interesting how close with this. Been meeting with some brothers.

11, 12 years every Wednesday morning, very keen man in Indianapolis. Men who have. Rather responsible positions.

Larry came to me about 15 weeks ago and he said, we're going to go through your book, Life's Ultimate Privilege, week by week. And he said, we'll be teaching and discussing it in a week for our left. He said, our last chapter, would you come and speak to the group? And I said, yes, I would like to.

I had no idea who was in that group of about 12 or 15 couples. I was amazed at the CEOs and the people of Indianapolis. What God had wrought in some of their lives and their testimony.

Next day, they'd ask some questions. One of them came and said, I just really wanted to ask Brother Verne from all that we've heard. Is he a Calvinist or an Armenian? I was so pleased when Larry said neither.

He's a paternalist. And I never said that out loud, I don't think. But you heard it now.

Anyway, I leave it with you, because maybe after a while here were men that really God's dealing with and working in their lives. I heard the chastening and the disciplining and the things I've been going through. And the holding steady because a faithful God is working fatherhood in them.

Friend of mine called J.F. Hacker the other day and said, what's the main theme of the Bible? He said, without a hesitation, it's fatherhood and sonship. You read that in Knowing God. What are you saying this afternoon? We may be a small little group here, but God's got a lot bigger thing going out here in the world.

When Francis Schaeffer started with the person of God, not just a power, not just a force, but somebody out here and it begins to unfold, this encourages us to realize that I believe we're in step with what God is doing. And I just like to add my part in saying thank God for the father who is one day going to have a vast family of sons. Every one of them conformed to the likeness and image of the Lord Jesus and the degree to which he can take us down the middle stripe.

Jesus learned obedience, yielding to his father, submitting and yet exercising. Both of these have to operate. I'm going to put that on the picture here.

I'd say there's the divine initiative and the human response always in balance. Father, I tried to share my heart this afternoon with a very precious, precious group of people. We thank you for the theme that's before us these days, the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

We thank you, Father, that it all began in your father heart. You want a vast family conformed to the likeness and image of him. And one day you'll put on display your lovely son and many sons all conformed.

The great satisfaction that it will bring to you will be because we enter into the enjoyment also, enjoying with you all that you're making for eternity. Oh, I claim this afternoon you will make this real to some hearts, some who may be feeble as when really their knees. They've just been wondering, questioning.

Is the race worth it? Help them to realize this afternoon. You strengthen feeble knees. You lift up.

You will bring us through. You're more concerned than we are to bring us to the final fulfillment that will bring honor and glory and pleasure to yourself, to your lovely son and our privilege of enjoy. We thank you.

And everybody said, amen.

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