

# Our Pattern, Trials & Growth

by John Follette

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*The sermon explores how trials and temptations serve as opportunities for spiritual growth and understanding God's presence in our lives.*

**Duration:** 2:06:06

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:6, Matthew 13:3-9, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 21:21, Matthew 23:13, Matthew 25:14-30, Mark 4:34

**Topics:** "Trials"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of John the Baptist and his doubts while in jail. John questions whether Jesus is truly the Messiah, as he expected a different outcome for himself. He sends messengers to Jesus to ask if he is the one they have been waiting for. Jesus responds by performing miracles and preaching the gospel, but also tells the messengers to tell John that blessed is he who is not offended by him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's plan and not being stumbled by unexpected circumstances.

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## Transcript

He, who for you stands all of heaven, precious King. St. Ralph, restful it is to be in thy, we thank thee that thou hast arranged it so that, while we are so concerned with the things of time, you give us this privilege of having a quiet time in which our hearts contact thee afresh in life, in light, and we are conscious, Lord, of the opening of our whole inner being to let it flow out to thee. If there be any impediment, anything that would hinder it, clear it away, clear it away, whatever it may be, so that some way there shall be fresh access, fresh access to thee, O God.

Thou who art spirit and light and light, thou art not too remote, far off, but thou dost say we live and move and have our being in thee, therefore thou must be very present surrounding us. Not a god off in heaven on a throne, but thou art immediate, thou art immediately by us. And if we desire, we have the privilege of cutting off the traffic of the outside, we can sever that traffic and instantly thou art there to receive us.

We thank thee for the day for all that thou hast brought to us. We committed the day to thee, of course, all of us, before we ever got up this morning, we committed it to thee. When we wake in the morning, our first thought is to commit our heart, commit this day, commit ourselves to thee.

We want to feel that that contact is made right fresh, right there. Then we venture out in the day with thee, and of course, dear Lord, we're occupied with so much. It isn't wrong, it isn't harmful, much of it concerns

thee and the purposes you have for us, but even those things can become an accumulation, so that it just, it clogs.

Don't let even the good, legitimate things clog this pathway, it's open. And so we praise thee for this day and for thy presence with us, for the supply of all things that pertain to us in life. And so now we just gather again at thy feet.

We like to sense that you've come into this room. You've been in this room so much since this retreat. We've felt your presence so very much.

You're here, we want to be in your presence, so that you can minister to us. Minister to us in any form, if it's prayer or praise or psalm or testimony, whatever may be contributed. And if it's through the breaking of the bread, which is the bread of life, and that's Jesus himself, if you can come to us that way, we want to be receptive.

Therefore, open all the avenues possible, that as you flow and move toward us, we should be able to receive thee in every angle, in every form, every shape, every approach, we shall respond to thee. Bless the word if we go into that, so that the evening shall be well spent, and we shall be fed and nourished. We need that, we need it so very much.

But it isn't that it's reflected again upon us that we'll be blessed, blessed, blessed. That God, if thou dost know, it's only through that that we are able to bring back again to thee the praise and the adoration, the thanksgiving, the self-giving, the giving of all that we have, flowing back to thee, that's only made so because you have to come first. We have to give back what you've already given.

And so be pleased to bless us this evening hour. Quiet our spirits, quiet our poor minds that work and become so agitated. Touch us in spirit, soul, and body, every department, we need thee.

We ask that thou will do that so that in return we shall be qualified and able to come closer to thee, able to receive thee. And thou will in the end be glorified, exalted, and lifted up. Oh, we desire it, Lord, with all of our heart.

Therefore we commit our thinking and all that we have to thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Have any of you something on your heart that you want to contribute to give? Has the Lord been helping you with anything that you would like to share with us, that you feel, well, I found this and I'd like to share it with you, have you? I want you to feel free in this little, it's a very homey circle.

It's just a little informal gathering. It isn't church, it isn't school, it isn't a prayer meeting. It's a little fellowship gathering in his name, and I want us to feel that each has something.

If you feel free to contribute it. And if, as I've said before, there are angles of the morning message, and I have the slightest idea of what to talk about. What did we have? I don't know, no kidding, I really don't know.

It had to be the lamb before the king. Oh, that was one thing, yes. We had to have the lamb before the king, that was a part of it.

We have broken bread, you know, in here. This is all broken bread, it's so broken up that you can hardly get any of it put together. But at the least it's bread.

And the natural often flares up. We had an illustration of that again this morning from last evening. Any other bits of it that you might want opened a little bit more? Temptation? Yeah, that's right.

How many got a little help on that? That idea of his pushing, being pushed through the temptation period. Now this might help you, that's starting me on something now. This might help you.

People often say, well, why did Jesus, the son of God, have to have such a terrible experience as that if he's God? Well, you see, we have to know something back of that. He is eternally God. God the son.

And God cannot be tempted. And God never tempts us. Now that's scripture.

Well then, if he is God, why did he get tempted? Well, it isn't the God in him that is being tempted because you can't tempt that. That God the son became a human being and is bearing the whole of the human and is becoming built up into the last Adam. And that suffers temptation through the devil.

Can you get it now? It's not Jesus as the son of God being tempted because you can't tempt. You can't tempt God. But when he has been pleased to assume for the time being this human frame, the human setup, I call it the concept because it is more than a body, the whole human nature concept.

Now that has to go through a process of discipline, training, and testing as the original Adam was supposed but fell down in his first test. Therefore, it says he is led into the wilderness by the spirit but tempted of the devil. He's not led into the wilderness by the spirit and tempted of God.

Well, why? Because he is in God's plan. He is in God's purpose. It is in God's purpose that he be led of the spirit into that wilderness.

Not that the Lord can do anything with him, not that at all. He has to be exposed to the terror of all of that for the sake of bringing to its perfection this human thing that he's bearing. It is perfect in its first sense such as a babe is a perfect human being as a babe but it has to be subjected in life to all things to mature to manhood.

Now that was like with this human nature which Jesus bears. It had to come through. That's why we say he learned and he grew.

Well, a divinity can't learn anything. It is omniscient. A deity can't grow.

It's finished. It's that. But this thing that he is bearing can do that.

And so he learned. He had to. He is limited to that.

He prayed not for an effect. He prayed because that was the avenue which God had made for humanity to use as the means. And he is humanity.

He is taking place of humanity for us so that he has completely finished all of that for us now. And that is made good to us because we are in him. And we have the benefit of his victory.

They have to be brought out in us but the victory is his which he gives to us. He is made unto me the righteousness which I cannot do. But he does.

He has that. That's the way he works. That's the way he lives.

So many times we forget that. That's a phase of truth. And so he has to have that.

Well, in that temptation, God uses the same, how shall I say, incident, the same episode. God, from his side, will use exactly that same thing for the proving and the culture and the building up of the man. While Satan uses exactly the same thing for its destruction and its death.

All the things that move from the approach of the enemy is negative. He has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Do you remember those? That's his objective.

The manifestation of the enemy in the life, in the world today, is unto what? A destruction. He has come to steal, to rob, to kill, to destroy, because that's the eternal antagonism of evil over against righteousness. But when God comes, his is in the sense of righteousness unto life and light and deliverance for growth.

As we said the other night, who planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It wasn't a satanic thing at all. That thing in itself is a neutral thing. The tree in itself is purely a neutral thing.

The whole thing depends upon who is operating through this media. If the enemy comes, he is using that situation. He is using the very thing that God planted and is intended to use for Adam.

The enemy is going to use that too. So when the enemy uses it, that is negation. And he is bringing this in the form of a temptation, for the enemy tempts.

And a temptation is always unto a depletion and unto a death. But he tempts to destroy using the same apparatus and exactly the same setup, exactly the same thing that God will use, but from God's side he uses it as the stimulant to cause him to grow. And yet it's the same old tree, the same fruit.

But when the enemy comes, why, he uses that very, very occasion. And God has planted that as his occasion to prove Adam, not tempt him. When God comes with trial, with testing, with proving, it is never to defeat us, it is to cause us to grow.

And if we could interpret the trial, the testing, the proving that God permits in our pattern, we would grow. But we never seem to interpret them. We confuse them and try to eliminate them from our pattern.

When we become conscious of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which the enemy is using as a means of tempting us, instantly we all want somebody to chop the tree down and take it away. But he never chops the tree down because we can't tamper with God's business. Well then we get all the promises and prayers and all the saints praying to destroy this awful tree.

Please let the tree alone. But why? Because God planted the tree. We have no business uprooting or destroying something that God has planted, that's a part of his economy.

What must I do? Learn how to look at the tree enough to interpret it. And when you can interpret your tree, you will know how to handle it. Most think that anything that is of that nature at all, especially if we are Christians, and baptized makes it still worse.

If you come into life like that, this idea of living in God and living in the Spirit and trusting God, there is a strange, funny idea. It's prevalent even among our people that that is some kind of a charmed life that excludes you from trouble or sickness or temptations and all that. Where is your victory? Where is your God? Did you have that? You hear it all the time.

You're a child of God, why are you doing sick? What are you talking about? Don't you know God at all? Well, if you know God and you live in the Spirit, you wouldn't be sick. Oh, what a lovely, funny, funny fairy tale that is. I always say, well, where have you lived the last hundred years? Did you ever read the Bible or did you ever read the lives of God's saints and the way he develops them? Don't you know that he can use all in him that could do that? God is not the author of evil in any form.

Well, of course the human, yes, the human man is created with that power. He's given the power to choose. And so since that's true, God permits this situation, that tree, you see, whatever form, I suppose we all have trees.

I don't know, I've got a whole forest of them. I don't have one, I've got a whole woods full of them. When we meet them, of course, in self-defense, this creature doesn't like disturbance.

The ego never likes that. He would like some kind of a safety or escape. But there's no escape when you walk with the Lord.

The minute you open yourself to God, you're exposing yourself to trouble, to testing, to proving, to all of that, you're exposing yourself to it. And you should. It is not an escape mechanism.

People think that even prayer is merely a means of escape. They use it as that. Are you in trouble? Oh, let's pray this thing right out.

Is this something? Pray it right out. Well, where will you go? Where will you grow? You can't grow that way. You have to learn to interpret the thing.

And if you can sense God is in this thing, God has permitted this thing, he is here, and this is really for my edification and my good, by my siding with God against that thing, and saying, I see this, Lord, by thy grace I say no. By thy grace I say no. By thy grace I say no.

By thy grace. Do you know how you grow? That's the way you grow. Now, that's the method of growth.

Growth doesn't come because you pray, oh, Lord, make me stronger. Well, don't pray that unless you mean it, because he's going to put something right there to do it. You say, oh, Lord, I want to be an overcomer.

I want to be a strong Christian and an overcomer. And what does he do? He blockades your way with a great mess or something. And then we get this route around it and tunnel it and do everything.

What is an overcomer? It's one who comes over, not one who goes around or goes through. He goes over. And so don't pray that unless you mean it, because you are subjecting yourself to that, and then don't be surprised.

As I said, I never knew there was so much of the devil and trouble and everything in my life until I had the baptism of the Spirit and came into the realm of spiritual reality. Then I discovered more trouble than I'd ever had in the world. Devil and demons and everything.

Never knew there was such a thing. Well, I was coming into the realm where I belong, and God knew that I had to have that in order to release me, to train me, to teach me. So with your tree, don't cut it down and don't ask your friends to come and cut it down with all their prayers, but learn how to interpret the tree and then take your attitude as God would have you, a positive attitude, and God helps you through it.

Well, you say, is that all? No, because just as soon as you get your victory over that tree, whatever form it is, I used to say to the students, don't let the glory of this victory blur your eyes to the battle that's right down the road because you're going to have another tree in a very short time probably. And you'll say, well, Lord, I just got through. And, oh, well, he says, there are 2,928 more trees down the line, but I don't want you to see them because you'll backslide and you can't take it.

So I'm going to give you a lollipop today and bless you terribly. Hallelujah. Well, when that all evaporates, he says, do you see your tree yet? I thought I did, but, Lord.

Well, open your eyes. Oh, I see it. Well, come on.

Then you go with it. I think it's wonderful. Maybe I am wrong in it, but I'm getting through a lot of things because God has helped me to do this.

So many times he says, come here with me. And it's just like an art of detachment. I become detached.

Even from myself or from the situation. And I go someplace over here with God and I look at that whole situation from his angle and there's an entirely different perspective. Absolutely.

Because I begin to see it as he sees it. Now he says, do you see that? I say, yes. Well, now go back and tackle it.

But if I start performing in the midst of it before I can get my bearings, I lose a lot of time. As a loved one who is taken or someone who is suddenly ill or someone who is attacked with a mental illness. God gives you the prayer for those things.

And sometimes it's this, in short. Resist evil. Resist not evil.

Now those are both attitudes that God tells us to take. For there is a time when we are to rise up in faith because he will give us that. He will give us that intuitive thought and notion.

This is the thing that is to be resisted, rebuked. Absolutely. And then there are times when he gives me no liberty at all for that.

But to endure the thing by the practice of grace and patience and love and the endurance that God will put in me. And then he will clarify the thing. He uses a prescription, I was going to say, according to the immediate condition.

Not one formula. You take one kind of pills for that. He doesn't.

Really, every one of them is peculiar in itself. That's right. Every last one.

And the trial has a peculiar reaction in you and me that nothing else can do. He's made it that way. That's the way God works.

Then don't sit down and say, well, why does God... I get really tired of that. Why? Why? Don't why God worship him. Can you remember? Don't why God worship him.

Even when you don't know Why? Just say, worship. Let it come out that way. Well, originally that's true because that's what we were made for.

And you can't be out of the Spirit and away from God when you do that. You're surely on the right track because he says that's for us. But when we why him.

No, no, no. So we have to learn in this pattern, in this traffic pattern in which we are involved, there are occasions for resist and resist not. There's a time for a deliverance of a great miracle and there's a time not in God's purposes because he allows that and he knows the outcome.

Now, Paul and Silas were put into prison. Well, why? Because they were wicked? No. It had nothing to do with Paul or Silas' personal life at all.

But they were very loyal to their testimony and to their preaching. And as a result of their faithfulness to God, their faithfulness to God, nothing to do with anything to punish them. God doesn't give us trials to punish us.

So many people feel right away they've got a sickness or anything's matter with them. God is punishing it. Now, please don't do that.

Paul and Silas are not put in their jail to punish them. However, they are there as a consequence of loyalty to God and God knows that. And God is going to teach them that God is greater than a prison and that through prayer miracles can be wrought and he gives them a great object lesson and a wonderful truth and a wonderful teaching.

And he, by the power of the Spirit, they have faith over this situation and they can sing and pray and the house, the prison opens. They're released. That's all right.

That's in God's thought. What? To get out of the prison? Yes. Who put you in there? God did.

You see the immediate soldier putting you in the prison. No, it is God using the soldier. You take a potato out of the kettle on a fork.

How did the potato get out of the kettle? The fork. Why, the fork pulled it out of the kettle. You took the potato out of the kettle on a fork.

No, you didn't. It wasn't any fork that took it out at all. You took it out through the medium of the fork.

But how many could see that you were back of that? You're a fork conscious. The fork. God put them in there.

And God took them out. They are his property. They are his people.

And God took them out through the medium of prayer and faith. And they're delivered. Well, now, don't make that a pattern.

Now, don't get dogmatic right away and make a pattern because you cannot make a pattern. John the Baptist was cast into a prison. Why? Because he was a backslider? No.

Sinner? No. Failed God? No. Had nothing to do with John the Baptist's life at all.

Was he getting punished? No. Well, who put him in the prison? Well, Herod. Herod didn't.

Herod was the fork. God had a hold of the fork to put him in. Can you see that or can't you see that? Well, why? Because God is greater than Herod and God is back of it.

Most people become conscious of the immediate. And don't do that. Why, Herod put him in.

What do we do? Now, let us all pray. Well, why? Why, don't you know how God got Paul and Silas out of prison? Prayer was made and they were delivered. Hallelujah.

Where is your faith? Oh, the prayer meetings I used to attend when we used to have deliverances and they were profound and wonderful. And now this man is a captive. Why don't you repeat history? How many of you know you can't get John the Baptist out of prison if you prayed your head off? How many of you couldn't? You couldn't anymore get him out of there than fly to the moon.

Well, maybe if we fast, a good deal. Maybe if we get a prayer chain letter going around the world like this so that there's a prayer going around for him all the time. Now we'll get ahold of God and get him right out.

Well, he delivered them. Why can't he deliver this one? I'll tell you, you want to hear it because he doesn't want to. Isn't it nice when God can do a few things that he'd like to do? No, we want him to be doing the things.

You can't, you couldn't get John the Baptist out of there. No, you can't. Well, why? Because in the purposes of God, this is necessary in John the Baptist pattern because his destiny is to be a martyr for the Lord's sake.

And you make martyrs by pulling them out of the prison and saying, now go out and preach and have a testimony of great deliverance and turn the world upside down. And they will all come to you because they have heard of your great deliverance. That's 1959.

Well, we don't. How can God be glorified? Listen, God can be glorified in a thousand ways that we can't think of. Could God be glorified in his death? Well, listen, wherever the will of God is accomplished, he is glorified.

Well, then when God permits the death, we say, ah! No, we say, glory to God. Well, why? Because his will is being done. Well, nobody wants that.

We sing it in singing books, you know, but when it comes in, we don't want it. Now, John has to stay in that prison. It's very trying.

He's shut away, and he searches his heart, and there is no reason that he can see why in the world. After his loyalty and his love and devotion, and there was a great union between John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus and a great understanding. Very, very real.

Until Jesus gave that lovely testimony concerning the greatest prophet. He gave him a tremendous testimony, not in the presence of John so that he ever heard it. No, no, no, no, but those are the things God thinks.

Those are the things that God thinks, and those are the things that Jesus knew too, but he didn't come and tell John that. He wouldn't come to John and say, among men born of a woman, he didn't. He said, get in the jail.

Oh, people, they get so tried at God's manner and way. You would say, well, of all that, why doesn't he get a lovely testimony about it? Now, he'll get one, but the testimony is going to be behind his back, for he doesn't hear it. What are you going to do with John? Well, he says, if you'll please let me alone a little while, I'm going to make a martyr out of him.

Could you please let me do a few things? No, I want you to do it as I think would be well, because if you only knew, Lord, what a lot of things could be accomplished through what I want you to do. If you would heal Susie, her husband's wife's daughter's cousin would believe, and it would stir the church, and we would have a testimony, and the town would be set afire for God. Now, come on, and you do that, Lord.

And the Lord doesn't do it, because he says, what a funny lot of trash you have in your heads down here. What a lot of funny stuff you do. My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways, and you'll just have to get used to it.

Because I did that over there, that doesn't mean I've got to do this. Well, I've got a text for you. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Oh, I knew that old one, that's an old one, that's old hat, I know that. What's he talking about? That God is under that word, under sort of a promise and a vow that he will do just exactly the same here as he did then. He's not.

Did you ever read the context and know what he's talking about? He's telling us that the nature or character of God is always the same. God is the same in nature, character, will, purpose, design. He is always the same in that field, yesterday, today, and forever.

It was to characterize in simple form that one unity in God which is never changed nor affected. In him there is no shadow of change in any form. He is eternally there.

The purposes of God are there, the thought of God. All of that is the same. He is the same.

Now, he will do the same every day. Well, when they get that, then they go and hang it up in the tabernacle and try to perform a healing service under it. And I think it's such a... What makes them do those funny things? Then compel God to do today what he did there because he is the same.

We're not talking about the things he's going to do. He can if he wants to. It's to tell of the nature or character of God which is always the same, unchanging.

That's what that has to do with. However, now if he wants to, he may repeat 10,000 times a thing which he did yesterday or the day before, or he may not repeat it. But we are such funny little creatures, we can't trust God out of sight or believe anything until we have a dogmatic statement that says, All right, that's the way people are made.

I don't know. The more you get into God, the more horrible that whole setup. You have to believe God, walk with God, have faith with him, in spite of all of this contradiction that we see.

And you can't... We're not here to justify God or to prove God or to keep his glory showing up. You've just got to have these teachers and preachers out today. They're trying to keep God on the throne.

Well, he's able to sit on the throne. We've got to keep his glory all shining all the time. Well, it's too bad he can't defend himself.

I haven't any kind of a God that I have to defend nor prove. But how do you know there is... Let's not rattle around in that. We're not called to prove God, we're called to worship him and adore him and to live with him.

But we're never called to prove him. We're never called to defend him. He defends himself.

But they don't... As I say, your God is too small. Our God, to most people, he's too small. They don't have any sense of the bigness, the authority, the greatness of God.

We've got to interpret him in the terms of our littleness of life. Now, that's right, and that's good, but don't push it too far. God is spirit, and the things of the spirit are only known to us, as he says, through the things which are seen.

He has to use the things which we see to interpret him. But this little interpretation which we have of the things seen is not yet that. Don't you see that, or don't you? It isn't yet that.

He is more than that. In school, what did we used to call it? Anthropos means man. Anthropology is the study of man.

And then when we interpret God through the anthroposic, that is the man, human way of interpreting, when we do that, that is purely the man fashion of interpreting an infinite thing, an infinite God. And so we only know him through the interpretation which we have of the things of which we are conscious. That's why the great teacher that Jesus is continually used every commonplace, ordinary, limited form, with which the people were familiar, to do his most magnificent teaching.

He never gave them philosophic terms. He never taught them with a reasoning process. He was too big for that.

He will reduce the most magnificent things in heaven to a little story. That's the art of the great teacher. Then he leaves us 2,000 years to understand the thing that he said.

It's so simple, you know. I've heard people say, well, I've read the book of Proverbs. I could make a book like that.

I said, try it. It sounds so. They say, well, the stories he told.

House built up here and the wind blew. Knocked it down. What's profound about that? Well, I said, you don't know what a house is.

But you see, now what I'm getting at is this. God is too infinite. He's too great for us to interpret him with these simple little terms which we have.

He says, the kingdom of heaven is like unto this. The things of God, they are like this. Well, then when we get a little understanding of this, we think we have arrived at that.

No, we haven't. For the this which we now understand is only the thing he says is like unto. This is like unto this.

How many can see the difference? Heaven is like unto this. Well, when I understand this, have I got heaven yet? No, I've got an understanding of the thing which he says is like heaven. So it's rather remote

after all.

Rather remote. Well, that's the way he teaches. So we just let him alone.

Let him take that. Now John the Baptist is in the prison. Not with anything he's done.

He could just as well sit there and get all cynical and grouchy at the Lord. Say, oh, where's God? I've been faithful and I've this testimony and all that. Well, finally, after he'd thought that through quite thoroughly, do you remember his conclusion? Just as human as yours and mine.

He didn't jump up and down the prison and say, hallelujah, I'm in here because God has sent me and everything is well. Glory to God. He did not.

He sat in the corner of that old prison house doing a terrible lot of thinking. He did a terrible lot of thinking and reasoning. And what was it? Can this have all been a sort of a delusion? A myth? Is this reality? Like people do with their experiences in God.

I wonder if that was just an emotional thing that happened to me or was there something real about it. I think perhaps I was just disturbed emotionally. A lot of them wave a lot of things back that way.

Now, what does he do? Well, he does what any of us would do. Questioned it. He questioned it.

He had a right to. Wouldn't we? Don't think it's anything funny sitting in the jail when you haven't any idea what under heaven you're there for when you're doing the very work of the Lord. And the Lord says, go and preach thus and so.

What do you do? He says, go to jail. And you say, well, what kind of a God is this? Doing his will and purchasing everything. Bang! Slaps him in jail, puts the bar on.

He doesn't come. No angel came in to talk to him either. And there was no song in his heart.

Well, now what does he do? Now watch this. Well, his only way that he feels will answer is to ask him for sure. Are you really this one we have accepted? Is this really a truth that I have laid hold of? This is when your truth gets a good test.

You know, the truth that you've laid hold of and dare to believe. Do you know God will test it? He'll put you in a jail for it. He sure will.

He's in jail for his faith in this truth. If your truth hasn't yet been tested like that, it isn't worth too much. Your truth has to be... It'll go through fire.

It'll come out. It'll go through its eclipse because it'll shine so much more beautifully afterward. But it'll have a period when it goes into eclipse like our faith and like these things that have to go into their eclipse.

Don't be afraid. We have so many examples of those who have gone through. Don't think that God's going to make you the exception in the universe.

I've taken them all through but you. And I don't think I can get you through. And so you are unique.

You're different from anybody in the world. No, don't do that. He's taken them all through.

He'll get all of us through. He who has begun a good work will finish it. He says so.

He does. He says that. Well, now let's get back to John.

Now, what does he do? A very natural thing. He wonders, is this truth that I have laid hold of and I've committed myself to and I've embraced and it's landed me here in this jail without any answer from the Christ, no consolation. He doesn't intimate to me, you're going to jail but don't be afraid.

He doesn't do that at all. He just, oh, he's in the jail. Well, so he has to do that to answer this awful thing that's in him.

We all do it. Have any of you ever questioned anything like that in God? When a trial has come over which you have no control and it is not due to anything that you have done. You've searched your heart and you can't find a thing.

Well, all of us have had it. That's gone very far with God. He'll get every one of us faced in proportion.

So he writes and he says, are you the Christ that we have been preaching, teaching or is there yet another? And the Lord sent a messenger and said, now don't be afraid, John. Everything is right and you will come out. And he sent anything about John, he doesn't mention his name.

When Jesus answers, he doesn't even mention his name. What does he do? He gives him something which will aggravate or increase the very condition in which he is now. He's in a horrible condition sensing that Jesus is over there doing all this magnificent work and I'm left on the outside getting nowhere and there's Jesus blessing all of those people.

So what does Jesus do? He sends him a word which will aggravate and stir that up worse yet because he hasn't had enough. John hasn't had enough training yet. Be careful.

The first thousand years are very difficult but after you get through a few hundred we begin to catch on. What does he say? Go back and tell him what a wonderful time we're having up here. The blind are able to see.

The lame walk. The gospel is being preached and we're having a tremendous time. So this messenger goes back to John and John says, what did he say? Well, he gave us the most glowing report of the things that are going on.

Wonderful work. Answers to prayer. Answers to the hunger of their hearts.

It is just tremendous. Oh, oh. Did he say anything more? Oh, yes.

Yes, he did. By the way, when he finished that he said, blessed is he who is not stumbled or offended in me. I always want to cry when I come to that.

Do you get it? How many know that's sufficient? All that great big display vanishes but John's poor, tired, tormented heart lays hold of that verse like that and says, oh, enough. What is it? Blessed is he who is not stumbled in me. Who is not offended in me.

John says, it's enough. That sounds like the Lord. That sounds like the Lord.

That's enough. All right. Have you come through? By that time, the messenger comes in and Herod says, cut his head off.

How many of you know Jered has had his head cut off? That's a very simple thing. But how do you know? How does he go? He goes and puts his head on the block in the security of that sweet word, the last word that Jesus gives him. Blessed is he who is not stumbled in me.

Who is not asking me ten thousand why. A hundred why. He never says anything about the answer to the why.

It is reflected upon John. And he says, blessed are you if you can accept me, accept all that I do without this miserable why, how. Blessed are you when you can acquiesce, be calm, acquiesce, acquiesce.

Say amen, Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And they say, let's take him out.

So he goes out on the strength of a very personal word, but a very searching word. Do you get that or don't you get that? Now do you see you can't leave that pattern of deliverance that they had for those two disciples. You couldn't use that pattern at all.

It isn't that God has the ability to do. It's always his purpose. I get vexed if I ever get into these, I don't go to meetings because they are too terrifying.

They are really and I can't take them. God knows it so he spares me, he never condemns me. I don't go near half of these meetings that people have.

There's nothing in me that is in one common with them at all. And they try to encourage faith in the people and they go around and say, have your faith. Have your faith.

Where is your faith? And they get rubbing, wrangling all about our faith business. And that's so terrible. Your faith, brother.

Have your faith. Do you believe? Do you believe? Oh, do you believe? I want to say, will you please sit down. I have faith and I'm believing, but I want to know what to believe.

You get a difference or don't you? And you'll hear them say, only believe. Well, believe what? Oh, glory to God. Believe, brother.

Believe. Believe. Well, believe what? Please hook me on.

God is able. God is able. And I've seen them prance up and down the platform, swinging their arms, telling about the abilities of God.

God is able. God is able, brother. God is able.

I want to say, sit down. I've known he's able for the last hundred years. I want to hook onto what he's able to do in this case, that's all.

Just put me right on that. But they never do. No, no, no, no, no.

It's always this rather, you know, general idea. God is able. Well, by heavens, we wouldn't be there praying if we didn't believe that.

What are you praying for if you don't have? You wouldn't be praying unless there was a movement of faith in your heart even to start the prayer. It's an evidence of some kind of faith in you. Or you wouldn't do it.

So instead of saying why, sometimes when you tease God like that, and tease him, and tease him, he's liable to say something to you, as he did to John. And if you aren't careful, it'll be something you wish you hadn't asked him, because it's worse to believe than if you hadn't asked anything. Sometimes he'll give you an answer that isn't too clear.

Do you remember one who asked a question like that as to the message of God? Well, at the Annunciation, when the angel came to announce to Mary that she was to conceive and bring forth this Christ child, her response immediately was, how can these things be, seeing I know not a man, I'm not married, how? Now, you see, her question issues from that natural thing right away, which is right, that's right. Because she said, it's a question of amazement. Just a question of amazement.

Well, how could this thing be? I'm not a married woman, how? Well, and the Lord sent a stenographer down, a special one, and gave her the most wonderful dissertation on the Incarnation. And after that, Mary understood all about the Incarnation and its purposes, cause and effects, and consequences, and she said, after this, I'll just believe and have the baby and be done with it. She did not.

No such thing at all. Not at all, not at all. But did you notice what he did say? He did tell her something.

He said, this will be accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost while you take a certain position, while you abide under the power of the Spirit. Abiding under the shadow of God. Well, now listen.

A shadow is not bright sunshine of illumination. A shadow is yet very secretive. And he says, abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and this shall be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, Mary has to drop her questioning and believe God. So she does, in an instant. She just, so let it be under thy hand.

And she was able to go. But he didn't answer in any real fashion what this Incarnation was. He merely said, abide under the shadow of this Almighty.

In the shadow. Well, when she was willing, and how many of you know she had to remain in the shadow a long time? She remained exactly what he said. She remained in the shadow for 30 some years.

And that was the shadow of her faithfulness. That was the shadow of her faith. There was a temptation we found last night when she hoped that she might come out of the shadow, but it would have cost time for her.

And so, he says, woman, be quiet, be quiet. Come, stay under the shadow a little longer. Well, who wants to stay in the shadow for 30 years or more? Well, you do when it's God's will.

And he gives you grace. Other times, he will lead another out in the bright sunlight with a miracle. Behold Him, and be delivered at once.

And great is the acclaim. And another says, not now. And sometimes, well, he likes to do that to saints that he can trust.

I've often said that any saint can be trusted with a lovely blessing. It's so lovely. But few saints can be trusted with a refusal or a denial.

But a saint that can be trusted with a denial and keep that in God, that is so much more to the glory of God and strengthening of faith than one who has to have the immediate. Anybody can take a blessing. That's all right.

But very few can be trusted even with a defeat. There are some people who can't take even a defeat. Well, why? Because of our reactions.

We get questioning, and we get cynical, and cravid about it, and we turn it in. That's all the wrong result of it, because we can't take the defeat gracefully. We can't take the denial.

I remember dealing with a woman a number of years ago, and she was great on divine healing. We call them the hips. They're hipped on it.

How many ever heard anyone say, they're just hipped on that? That means they're sort of caught on it, some kind of a thing. They get hipped on it. And she was just hipped on divine healing.

Everything's circulating the world around her. She's hipped on divine healing. And, of course, she wanted everybody to come in and everybody to be healed, because she felt it was a great defeat, if not.

Well, she had an immediate member of the family who was in great need, terrible need, terrible need. And just a young person, and she felt, well, that's nothing to God. God is able.

God has healed all the rest of them. Why shouldn't he heal this one? So they gathered for prayer, and I was praying about it, and I can't help what the Lord tells me. And the Lord told me, I'm not healing.

I thought, all right, I'm not going to tell her that. He said, Lord, you're God. You can talk to her.

You can tell her what you want to. I know now what to do. He was not going to heal her.

He wanted to teach her something. She couldn't learn how to release and let fall into the hands of God anything without at least a little touch on it, you see, just a little holding of the thing. And she couldn't take a denial.

She couldn't take it. I thought, well, now go on. She traveled.

They were wealthy people, and she traveled over this country to every healing healer that I know of. I think she had all of them lined up and had been in all of their services and been prayed of over this case by every one of them, all of the healers, some of them twice because it didn't catch and didn't work. Well, I thought, well, go on.

You're not going to get anywhere, but I wouldn't tell her. Well, that would look silly. You see, you're full of unbelief.

Don't come here. You're full of unbelief. No, I wasn't full of unbelief.

I had a word from the Lord, that was all. So that went on for quite a little while, and she came again. She wept before the Lord.

She said, the Lord never refused anybody in the days when he was upon the earth. He healed them all. He never refused.

Now, I want to say my weight, dear. He didn't heal them all at all. There were plenty that he didn't heal, and there were plenty of graveyards that he didn't raise either.

He raised a few dead folks, but he didn't raise every graveyard he came to. Well, he's able. Now, please get that able out.

Bury him somewhere. He is able. Raised Cain a little while.

Tired of able. So, she used to weep, you know, and have a time. And all the time, it kept coming and coming.

She'll have to learn to take a denial. Some can take a blessing, but so few can take a denial. Well, if this is a denial in the Lord, accept it, because there will be a recompense and a reward from it.

That went on two, three years. And finally, I came and touched the woman again. And, of course, in the meantime, the poor person had been taken to heaven.

Well, sure, the Lord said he was going to take him. Well, then why not believe the Lord? And, you know, I never saw such a wonderful change in a person through that very thing. Instead of becoming cynical, it was just like an awakening to her.

She found that, she said, I had to let go to release and accept a denial of what I thought must be or God would fail. And he hasn't. She was as free as a bird, just sweet and beautiful.

I said, well, to me, that was just lovely that God didn't have to come to her and coddle her and answer the prayer so that she could live in her little circumscribed testimony of some kind. Oh, oh, oh, oh. But you see, in our anxiety, in our desire, we allow that to come in and interfere with even when the word of the Lord would come.

We're so warped with a certain trend of our thinking and of our thought and of our desire that we get warped under that. And even when the Lord speaks to us, we can't get it straight. I remember praying for another person.

And this woman was very ill. And, oh, great prayer had been made because she seemed, seemed, now you see, it seemed to us she was a very necessary factor. Well, now nobody's indispensable.

Nobody's indispensable. If God sees good to take anyone anytime He wants, that's His business, then let Him have them. Be still about it.

Well, now, how many of you can get an interpretation of that? Well, let me tell you something. Your interpretation is going to be determined on the thing that you're thinking and praying about. It sure will.

So I went to one of the leaders, finally, when they probed at me long enough. And he said, I think you know something. I said, I do.

Now, I don't want to do it because I'm afraid I'll upset your faith. And I don't want to disturb you. If you feel that you have faith that that's going to be why, amen.

I don't. I'm not praying a lick on that thing. I'm praying that this release shall be in God, sweet and lovely, that I'm not holding on to God for the last breath.

I said, I don't do that. I can't do it. They said, what did you see? Well, I said, this is what I saw.

And I gave it to them. They said, oh, isn't that lovely. Hallelujah.

The flowers are the flowers of the resurrected life. And she's delivered from this sickness. How many of you see that was automatic? That was the natural thing.

One more delivered. And here's another one delivered from this awful sickness. And hallelujah, we've heard from God.

Well, that was a good lesson to me because I could see that even when God speaks, if you're not careful, you are bound to make it turn around to mean the thing that's in your heart, in your thinking. You make even the word of God turn around to mean that. Because you read any sign which is indicative of the place of the choice that you want.

Well, of course, in a few days she was gone. And then they looked at the dream from quite another angle. There were the flowers of the resurrection and the life.

And the angel was delivering her from the bondage of this earth into the heavenly life. I knew that when I saw it in this dream. But, you know, they were so warped.

Now, don't interpret the leadings of the Lord along those lines too often. People get the leadings of the Lord too much by certain circumstances. As this is the leading of the Lord in the evidence.

Now, don't do that. I saw that in the testament concerning the story of Peter the other night. You remember God had called Peter from the fishnets.

All right. Now, that is a vocation that's set aside because Jesus wanted him in this circle. As a representative for this great lovely thing that's been projected down the line for 2,000 years.

And Peter was to be one of those early supporters of it. How limited Peter's vision was of the thing. He had the slightest idea what it was all about.

But, of course, and the motive in many of the cases. When you analyze the motive why they were willing to leave and to follow. Was because they were yet under the kingdom complex.

Every one of them. Now, those disciples weren't coming following Jesus just because he was precious Jesus. And it was also wonderful.

It was not. And they give way to it every little while. They were motivated by the desire to come in on the ground floor of the kingdom which they would set up.

Now, that was, and that's what A.O. Peter. Two times he let the cat out of the bag. We have left all things, you know, to follow the incoming.

And where are we? We left it. Where's your kingdom? There was one of them. Another time is right at the very close.

They hadn't yet caught their vision. But the Lord, you know, when Jesus calls and I call him, he sees three things. He sees the person.

Then he sees past the person to what he's going to have. And he sees the ultimate result of what that whole vision is. He's able to do that.

We look at and then we stop. He looks at and through and past. And when he called Peter, he knew what he was doing.

We'll let Peter lie, cuss and swear and jump up and down and have fits. That doesn't matter. The call of God is there and he's going to have his way with it.

Sure will. Sure will. But Peter and the rest of them, they get all hysterical right away.

I don't like hysterical things. I don't like all that. So he says, Peter, you come out of that and you come follow me, which he does.

And then when he lays to them the principles of the kingdom and what he's doing and his fellowship and all, he follows along very well, very bravely. But you see, now here's a little thing to remember. He is doing that in faith because his faith is continually bolstered and sustained by the immediate presence of the Lord.

Isn't it lovely to have faith when the immediate presence of Jesus is there? Of course, he can follow Jesus right along because I can touch him and talk to him. Why shouldn't he? Because he has wonderful faith. That isn't faith, that's sight.

That's sight. So he follows the Lord, you know. And then toward the end, Jesus feels he should warn them about his homegoing and this great tragedy that's coming.

So he says to them one time when they're talking, he says, now listen, I have to go down to Jerusalem and be offered up and taken. And he can hardly get the words out of his mouth, you know, about his dismissal and dying and to be slain. He can hardly do that before Peter takes hold of him.

We say, and he rebuked him like it was a rebuke. But you know, it is a very severe rebuke. Like we would take a person by the arm and say, oh, no, no, shake him like that.

No, no. Now that's the force of it. That's the force of that word.

He was so agitated. He takes the Lord by the arm and says, oh, no, no, be far from me. We don't want death.

We don't want a dead Messiah. Be that far from me. Why is he so concerned about Jesus being spared? Because he loves him so sweetly? No, the bottom will go out of his ship.

Don't you know that or don't you? The bottom will go out of his ship. It isn't because he just loves Jesus so. And he says, oh, that would be a terrible thing to happen to you, Jesus.

Oh, no. He says, far from me. Don't let that touch you.

We want a live Messiah who will come into this thing that you have told us. How does he answer? That was so satanic right through precious Peter that he calls him Satan. Now, that's when even a good thing

can become a most powerful instrument for damage.

That could. That could be a very powerful damaging thing for this personality to be pushed in and divert. And he says, no, I'm not to be diverted through your remark.

That savors of your flesh and of the world and of that system. I'll go. So he had to rebuke him.

So you see, Peter has this for a long time in his system. And every little while, it will have to crop up. Now, come back.

Where are we? This is. I'm wandering around. Come on.

Where is this? These were two illustrations of Peter's. Well, it is Peter. Oh, in his interpretation.

So we have to we have to be careful. Now. Now, he shows already this sort of weakness, a fallacy in him.

And Jesus has told him all about this tragedy that's to come. But they don't even have an understanding of it until the whole thing is over and the spirit of God begins to quit to them. Then brought to their remembrance the things which he had said for up to this time.

It'll say they understood not the word. They couldn't catch it. They couldn't savvy it.

Now, all right. Well, listen. How is Peter going to make his escape from this tragic upset, this upheaval? Jesus goes to the cross.

And dies. Their choice Messiah. And Peter's vision of all this is wrecked.

He sees no evidence at all of the things which he had in his heart hoped for. And he had made his devotion to the Lord for all this. He had laid down his life for him.

He said, we've cast in all that we have for it. Now, where is it? Well, Jesus doesn't give any evidence of it at all. There's not a sign of a kingdom or a throne or a bugle or banner.

Not even a two-by-one or a bugle. None. Well, when your faith, get it? When your faith is not able to bridge a chasm like that.

And there are many chasms in our pathway that we have to learn to leap in faith. But when your faith is too weak to bridge a chasm like that. To yet dare believe the Lord and remain quiet.

Your natural spirit will become agitated. And your flesh will begin to bring in an escape mechanism as a substitute. Because your faith will not answer the thing that God is saying.

So you say, all right, I can't do it with this, this, this. And you make an escape. Well, how did he make his escape? Well, he said, evidently I haven't got the idea of this kingdom thing that he's been preaching.

I've listened to it. I've given all that I have. But it doesn't seem to play out, to come to its climax anyway that I had ever thought.

He's dead. And we don't want a dead Messiah. Now, if this great vision that we've held has collapsed, as it evidently has.

It's just seemingly collapsed. And he's gone and he's left us. I'm not going to stand the humiliation of going down the street and have everybody once in a while poke me and say, how was your kingdom, brother? That would be a natural consequence.

Where's your king that you had a couple of months ago you were shouting about? Well, that's a terrible thing to think you'd have to have that haunting thing on you all the time. He says, I know. I'm going back to my fishing.

That's one thing that I do know. That's my natural vocation. Now, how many of you see nature coming in, protruding? Do you get it? Do you get it or don't you? How many see the nature coming? All right.

As long as you can see that truth. So he says, I can fish. And perhaps this has been a rather emotional matter.

And I haven't lost my balance in the flesh. I've seen some wonderful spiritual things with that man. But I can fish and I'm going fishing.

Well, now the influence of that unbelief will radiate and touch other lives. And it does. So before you know it, somebody else is going to get the same feeling.

He said, well, we'll go with you. We'll go with you. I'll go with you.

Now, that's a terrible thing. Here is Peter moving in unbelief and disobedience. Two things.

Unbelief and disobedience. He's moving out under that. And I'm going fishing.

Well, now, come back to our idea of being led and directed. Did you ever notice that when he went and says, and immediately there was a boat at hand for them? Now, that's in the scripture. Why does it say that? Because this is a little drama again, a picture lesson.

There was immediately a boat at hand for them. And Peter can say, praise the Lord. I'm in the will of the Lord.

He's provided everything for me. Is that so? Why, yes, he's provided a boat and everything. And I'm, why, it's the Lord opening the way for me.

He's provided. Now, wait just a minute. No, you're still not in God yet.

Suppose he provides a boat and a sandwich. And you go sailing out. How do you know you're going right out in what? Disobedience and in unbelief.

So the Lord says, now Peter, to himself, Peter has to have this. It's the only way I can get at him. It will be nature making its fling.

And I'll pray for him. I'll be up on the side of the mountain watching him. So he goes up there and watches him.

He sees all this. So he lets them fish. And they fish, and they fish, and they fish.

Now, you will never get a fish under those circumstances. You can't even get one to justify yourself. For you'll swim farther on now by saying, see, I caught a fish.

And that's the great evidence. It's the Lord's leading. He not only provided me a boat, but he's given me a fish.

I must be in the will of the Lord. No, dear, you're completely out. But no one dares to tell you.

To kill you dead, and we don't want you dead. So he goes and fishes. And the Lord stays up on the mountain and says, go on, fish a little more.

You don't get it. Oh, fish, somehow. Oh, fish more.

You only fished about an hour. Keep on. Well, maybe the things of the Lord are delayed.

You know the Lord has a way of delaying. And we will fish still another hour in faith, of course. And so they cast the nets on another part, on a little shoal where they always thought things would come to pass.

Doesn't come to pass. Well, perhaps we haven't been earnest enough in our fishing. Go on, as I said the other night, till your tongue hangs out and exhausted, perhaps the Lord can do something.

So he keeps on. Fished all night. Well, now the Lord says, I think they've had plenty.

He has to wait until we get exhausted, you know. He can't help half the people because they are still so agitated and involved that he can't get near them. He loves them.

He says, hurry up, dear. I've watched over you for five, three, four years. You can't seem to get through.

Now go on, a little more. The Lord. Yeah.

I'm the Lord, all right. So he waits until morning. Did you ever notice that? He didn't come to them in the middle of the night.

He waited until the morning dawn, and there's always a morning. That's right. There's always a morning.

There will be a morning, and he's going to wait for it because you aren't ready earlier. There are souls that God can't deal with. We all know that, don't you? You know it yourself.

There are souls that God can't deal with at all. They're not ripe enough for it. They haven't passed enough.

They're not exhausted, I call it, enough. They aren't yet, and God has to wait and wait and wait. And so when the morning comes and there's a mist over it, it is the clear shining morning of deliverance, glory to God.

It's morning, but there's an awful mist in it. I'm glad, too. The brilliance, he might upset them again off on another tangent so he can't give them too much because they'd have more leadings.

They would. I know, I've seen them. I handle them all the time.

I've had cases since Christmas enough to raise the dead. I don't know. They don't seem to learn fast.

So when morning has come and there's a mist, he goes down and begins to walk back and forth on the shore and builds a fire, and when they get a little bit nearer, what is it that happens? Well, it is the Lord takes the initiative. He always has to. In that place, you will never take the initiative.

It'll have to be the Lord. You're so involved in your justification of being in the will of God because all of this has happened, you're too far there to even think of calling. You're still walking.

No, it's Jesus. And so he said, say, now you fish long enough, come on in, I want to talk to you. Peter, what are you doing out there fishing anyway? You know, I've called you from those nets.

I've called you from being in that. Now, what do you mean by it? Do you mean to tell me you backslide as quickly as that? And they had a camp meeting, and the Lord said, all those who have failed of the Lord come forward. He didn't choose anything like that.

That's 1959 brand. He didn't at all. He made a nice breakfast for them.

But what was it that brought them in? His question. He says, did you catch anything? Did you catch anything? Now, you had your fling. Did you get anything out of it? That's what he was really telling them.

You know that too. What is that? He's bringing them to their place of confession so that he can release the blessing. And all blessings rest upon a foundation of confession.

You always have to have it. Always have to have it that way. All blessings will rest upon the foundation of a confession.

And so he says, did you catch anything? Very cheerful. But how come you see a thousand sermons in it already? Why certainly. Peter begins to wonder about some things too.

He's not too dumb. He says, did you? And they can only make one answer, no. In other words, no.

This is disobedience and failure, and I must confess it. No. I got nowhere in my self-endeavor.

There's nothing in... I get nowhere with it. That's all I want. So you said, no.

Come out here and have breakfast with us. So he provides a table for them. But how many of you see now why last night's message will hook on in here? Last night's message about love is gone, love is gone, that hooked right on in here.

Because Jesus has that up his sleeve all the time, that he's saying, did you get anything? How was the fishing, boys? Did you get anything? Well now, when he makes the coals of fire and invites them to breakfast, they'd have this fish, and he says, you caught some fish? You've got fish? Where are the fish? Do you know who was the first one to answer and get out of the picture? It was Peter. He was warmed thoroughly. He was by that coals of fire, warmed in his hands, and I think he was inside scorched, almost brown, with conviction.

And the very first one to escape from this terrifying thing was Peter. So he says, oh, I'll go. Let me get out of here.

And so he goes on down, gets the fish, and brings them back to him. The Lord isn't going to let him get by on that either, not at all. Why does he say, warm your hands here? Why does he offer that? To arouse his memory.

Where did he last warm his hands? Only a few hours back of that, he was warming his hands where he didn't belong, at the enemy's fire in the little brazier that was outside of the court there. And he stood

warming his hands with the unbelievers and lying. So he says, don't you want to warm your hands again? Here's a nice fire.

What a clever way. It was very sweet, but how many of you know he was killing them dead with his kindness? Just, he was slaying them with his kindness. Well, what I was getting at was this fact.

Now, if he wants to, he can justify himself in all that procedure because of the little evidences, which he thinks are of the Lord. The Lord did it. The Lord knowing it.

You can't take things out. For instance, I was talking to people at the table tonight. Some, I guess Vera asked me if I had any idea of something about a trip or something.

Didn't you? Somebody asked me if I thought of any journey or trip this summer, this year, this winter. And I said, no. I don't have.

Now, that doesn't mean there are no openings for me. I have enough openings that would carry me for two, three years if I had in my spirit the liberty to accept and minister in them. I could be busy all the time.

But I can't do that unless there's something in God, some movement, some intimation from his side that would help me with it. So, I was talking about Australia. Well, I had a lovely ministry in Australia.

And I told them whenever I go on these trips, I have no missionary society or church back of me. I always go on my own. There's no one ever pays any of my expenses.

God takes care of that. I go around the world. The Lord gives me the wherewithal and I go around the world.

Nobody calls me and says, you're going out under this group or the council or the missionary society. I don't have any of that at all. But I just know that when the Lord says go, he will provide the goal with which I must minister.

Well, now, they've asked me to come to Australia. Well, that's a lovely invitation. And so, not too long ago, I had another very lovely letter.

And they said, with your expenses all paid, Brother Follett, will you please come and minister? Well, how nice for me to say, oh, the Lord is in this. Because I see how he's offered. Even my fare is paid for me to go to Australia.

And they are hungry people and they need help. And since the Lord has provided my way by an offer of my expenses, I will go. No, I sit still.

That doesn't move me at all. Well, why? What will move you? When that lovely spirit that moves in my inner being, begins to stir in me and begins to speak to me, I say, all right, Lord, you're in this. Fare or no fare, this is God done a venture.

But I can't venture by signs such as that, which most people use to interpret as evidence that you're in the will of God. You can have all of those things and not be yet in the will of God. Immediately, there was a ship at hand.

It says that right there. And he gets in. And he can turn around and say, see, I'm in the will of God.

He's provided a ship. He's provided all of this. That's no evidence you're in the will of God.

He may very often encourage us. I'm not discouraging anyone. He may, if he wants to, give intimations on the outside by little things like that.

He may do that if he's pleased to, to give us a little intimation. But we always know when that intimation comes as a little sign that it is indicative that it is in his will. We always receive it in his will.

But I can't receive it not in his will. I couldn't receive the passage to Australia just because it's provided. I know.

That has to be in the will of God with an intimation. Sometimes he gives us a smaller indication. I don't care.

Even if it's small, I can't interpret it. You have to learn to do that. It saves you a lot of trouble.

It saves you a lot of heartache. It saves you a lot of confusion. It's the way we learn to interpret it.

It's time to close now. It's nine o'clock. No, I thought it was time for us to go.

It's nine o'clock. You rascals. Do you get something, honey? You got something in all this wandering? Did you get a little catch of something to kind of instruct you a little bit along the way? Sometimes there are little warning signals that I throw out.

There's a question I have. Is it time while I'm at this point, don't you do the next best thing? No. No, that's for advice.

No. That's like the missionary call. I heard one speak and they said, oh, getting this call to the foreign field.

The need over there is the call. How many of you know that's the most stupid thing to say? Call to stay at home. Why, you are a call to go or you're a call to stay.

It doesn't matter. The call works both ways. And I'll never forget that woman.

I can see her yet, standing in the side aisle. And she was so disturbed because people were talking about having calls to go and the calls. Call, she said.

The need in that country is a call in itself. Well, suppose we answered all the needs in the country. What a mess we would be in, wouldn't we? Why, it would be terrible.

You can't call that a call. That's a need. But the heart has to be called to it.

And sometimes we're not called to that at all. Now, this idea of when you've gone just so far, this is a rather homely illustration that I've often thought of, and it blessed me when I heard it because it's happened to me. So that's how I know it.

I was up in British Columbia. And how many of you know those logging camps they have up the stream and then these big nests of logs that they float down the rivers? You've seen them perhaps. Great big nest.

Then they come into a log jam. Well, sometimes that log jam will remain there for quite a long time and you have to learn how to cross the log jam by a guide who goes first and marks the logs which you are to take. And you have to learn that you can't just take, well, there's a log, step on it.

No, step on this one which will lead you there, which will bring you here, over there, then back. Well, why? Because that's the tested road. And your wisdom of a shortcut and the strength of the log is all out of order.

And they will warn you. You will see an arrow chipped on the log that you are to take. Now take this log, then over to this log and that one.

Well, I want to get over there. Now be still. I want to go.

It's shorter here. I think I can make it in a hop, skip and a jump. I can do it.

No, you can't. No, no. Now this is the thing that I want to get at.

And he said, you will probably come to a place where it's rather long, long to walk and you get disturbed and distressed or dizzy. He says, always straddle the log. I've never forgotten it.

Well, what does that mean? The log that you are on is the safest place because it's where God has brought you so far and you're safe. All right, straddle on the safety log, which you are, until you can get your equilibrium. Don't venture because you can do that.

No, you can't. And he always said, straddle the log. I thought, well, that's just right.

Not use my wisdom, say, well, the next best thing is to jump on this one. No, the next best thing may be some offer of the flesh for all we know. It may be the enemy coming as an angel of light.

And he has the power to do it. As an angel of light. And you start rationalizing and it seems the most possible thing in the world.

Keep on your log. Straddle your log. Well, you know, it takes more faith and time to straddle a log.

Sometimes it nearly kills you to stay straddled on a log for six months. Well, that was advice to me and I found it at work because finally I would get my equilibrium and my balance and I would know this is the step to take and I'd take it. I was safe.

All this question of guidance and direction is infinite. I thought someone was asking a question. I did.

What did you say? It is infinite. It's infinite. He directs us through so many ways and methods.

The only thing I know is it's a very homey thing. Stay close to the Lord. Keep in his presence.

Keep in a real intimate fellowship with him. And I don't feel that there's any danger of us being misled and going into funny things. I don't think so at all.

And you hold saying wait. He's going to show you sooner or later. Yes, he will.

He won't let you. But if in our time of testing, waiting, that's where the temptation to substitute something, that always comes in. We have to learn to deny that.

Now, I may go to Australia sometime but I don't know. I'm not going because I'm invited and I have the offer of my way paid. That doesn't intrigue me at all.

And yet I love my ministry there and I would be happy to go. I like Australia. I like the people.

God gave us good ministry there. Very blessed ministry. But I couldn't do that on those meetings.

You can see those could be interpreted as, well, that's the Lord. They'd ask you the way, all of this. That's the Lord.

No, not yet. So we have to learn. I was thinking of us gathering here in this little quiet place, discussing these things of the Spirit and our walk with Him.

The Lord, in His desire to have a alone time, a quiet time. You ever notice it? Even He desired a respite. It's good for us.

We get so entangled with this external life out here, even our religious life, that it's good for us to be quiet. And I was thinking of how sometimes it works out. The Lord wanted that too.

I think it's in this 14th chapter. I'll just read a few verses in there. I think it's in the 14th chapter of Matthew, as I remember it.

Some of the little words in there are so good. Matthew 14. I was quite interested when I read it.

Just tip it just a little. No, don't try it. Esther, please.

Please don't try it, because I'm afraid you'll upset something. Now sit down. I appreciate your kindness, but I can't trust you with it.

Yes, that's better. I appreciate your kindness, but that thing tips and away goes the water, and then we all say, I'm so sorry. We just don't have it.

In this 14th chapter, here's one. Let's take this one. There are two.

Here's one. I won't take that other one. I'll take this one.

In the 14th chapter, in the 15th verse, is another time when He's alone with His disciples. And when it was evening, His disciples came unto Him, saying, this is a desert place, and the time now is past, and the multitude has come, and so on. He is... I'll get this straight.

There's another one in here. There are two of them. Wait.

I'll get it. I'll take another one. There are three.

I'll take one in Mark, which is very good, too. Take this one in Mark. In Mark.

And in the fourth chapter, and the 34th verse, it says, and without a parable spake He not unto them. And when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples. Now, we'll just take that little verse, but I want to get your context to straighten us out in this.

You see, He has been... He's in a teaching mood, and that whole chapter is full of His teaching. It's parables about the kingdom was likened to. It's just an elaborate, wonderful display of His teaching.

Well, when that is all over, He goes where He is alone with His disciples, and it says, and when He is alone with His disciples, He expounds all things to them. He didn't do the expounding all while He's teaching, because He's teaching to groups of people and to multitudes. Well, what is His method among the multitudes, then, when He has a multitude of people? His method of approach to the multitudes when He's outside here.

He works miracles which will have appeal through the flesh. They have no background, no powers of reception in spirit, but He can appeal to the body in which they live, and so through the medium of the body, in a miracle of healing, He gets an approach to the heart. Then He leaves the healing all aside.

That's the most incidental thing, because it was the means by which He could approach them on still another level. So get the periphery of this circle as it circles about. You have the multitudes.

How does He work with them? Now, He doesn't teach them without a parable, without the simplicity of a story. It's not complicated, it's not elaborated, it's not open. It is purely a suggestive thing.

So He says, I want to tell you a story, and He preaches and says to the multitudes, not without a parable did He ever speak to them. Now, that's as far as you can go with them on that level, and He works miracles for them. But you see, there's another level.

Now, you come up off of that level, which is purely in the sense relation, and the Word of God, which is in its simplicity is a delightful story of something you can seemingly understand with its first interpretation. But the parables are like, it's a funny illustration, but it's just like an onion. How many of you know you can peel off a layer of the onion and you still have an onion? And you peel off another layer and you still have an onion? How many of you know? To me, the parables and the stories of the Lord are just like that.

You can peel off a peeling of that, and maybe for three or four years, you'll walk under the power and the wonder of what you've found by the first layer that has been peeled off. But maybe five years from now, He'll tell you how to take another layer off of the same onion. You haven't struck the heart at all, dear.

You haven't come to the heart at all. No, you haven't. You're coming to all that embraces the heart, it holds the heart, which you haven't got there.

Now, that's like with His parables. Look at the parables. Do you know what the word parable means? It's a Greek word, it's good.

It comes from two little words, because many of our Greek words are made up of a combination. Para is by. Belil is to throw.

And a parable is something which is thrown by the side of the truth as a story to illustrate it. This is the truth, but you can't get it. It's too abstract.

It's too spiritually fascinating. And how can you get it? Well, He says, I will reduce this wonderful thing that I have in spirit, that I want you to have. I will throw a parabal.

I will throw a parable which will captivate it. Parabal. To throw to the side.

And so a parable is that which is thrown to the side so that the truth may take a more definite, articulate form that we can at least catch something of it. But, you know, we never exhaust them. I've read these parables for years and years.

And every once in a while I read one over again and I say, my dear Lord, I've read that a thousand times, I think. And now I see something. And it's the same old story.

Just the same old parable. Not a word added or subtracted. Well, what is it? Well, my onion.

I've skimmed off a layer and I've found I've got an onion. But I have found something nearer to the heart of the reality of it. So, among the multitude.

Now get it. With this multitude, he teaches by parable without extensive analysis and elaboration. What else? He will give them signs and healings and things which will appeal to the people on that level.

But when he's alone with his disciples, did you ever see him work a miracle for one of them? To say, now stand back and I will work a miracle for you and tell it how it's done. He doesn't do that. Signs are for unbelievers.

That's an awful scripture. If you have faith, I don't think much of you, if you have to go to a camp meeting every whip stitch and see a miracle wrought, to have faith. That's a shot in the arm, brother.

You haven't got your health yet. You know it or don't you know that? That's purely a shot in the arm to bolster up, to sustain you. That's not real faith.

He never took a disciple and worked a miracle to prove anything to a disciple. He worked his miracles for unbelievers, all the people out there. Where was his teaching? When he is alone with his disciples, he expounds.

And all those expoundings, he only gives a very simple touch of it. He gives us a little about the interpretation of the sower, which is very good. He had given it to the disciples, but the disciples said, what do you mean by it? And he gave us a little interpretation, but not extensive.

Just more suggestive. This seed did this, and the ground was this, and this, and this. Now he says, work it out.

Well, that's like it is with the parables. They are like suggestive material that the spirit can take a hold of. And when the spirit gets in there, he makes the parable alive on several different levels.

Now, his healings, you see, are among the unbelievers, and it's very easy to appeal to them. They are conscious of their needs, and he says, believe, believest thou this? And they said, oh yes, Lord, presto, the man's got his arm fixed. Well, that's good, that's good.

Do you know something? Let me help you. After you move around in that realm where your faith is bolstered continually by that, by that which you say justifies my faith now, God will lift you from that because you have now something of God in you. You have faith in you.

He's going to develop your faith, so he lifts you right off of that, and he puts you up on this level. Now you have a sickness, now you have a need. Can you come with the same little old technique that you use down here? No, it doesn't work at all.

And you pray, and you pray, and you pray, and you pray, and you can't get anything, and right as you're at the altar, and you've seen it yourself, at the altar, here's a precious, wonderful, darling saint who has walked with the Lord Jesus so sweetly. You know, he's just really sugar pumps, and so devoted, and loves

the Lord so earnestly, and she is there praying for such a thing, and she can't get anywhere, and the Lord knows, and he says, well, keep praying, dear. And so he moves on, and up comes a little old beginner, and probably a sinner, doesn't know very much of anything, and he has to be healed, and the Lord says, sure, you believe it, son? Yes, that's all right.

Oh, and he gets a marvelous healing. And then everybody says, well, what's the matter with this? She's a saint of the Lord. How many have you seen it work that way? Over and over and over and over.

Well, then, you know what's the matter? Lord, let me help you. If you are a child of God, and living and moving with him, you are not on the level of a sinner. You are not.

He is not going to cater to you on the level of a sinner. No. He expects you now to respond, not for the sign and the evidence here, but because he speaks a word up here.

And he says, believest thou this? Well, I don't feel. Oh, you're down on that level again. Come back.

This is the level in which you belong. Believest thou this? Lord, I don't feel. All right, go down on your level again.

Come back again. Over for months he deals with the soul to keep them maintained on this level. He says, believe my word that I am saying.

Believe my word of healing. Now, I'm not going to let you see nor feel a thing. You're going to just feel as dumb and as sick as ever.

But here's my word. Now, believe it. And as you mature and grow in faith, God delivers us from one level to the next.

He builds us all the time. Now, that's why he said to Philip, Philip, you remember, wanted to know things that he shouldn't know. And he says, now, Lord, just show us, reveal to us this father business, and we'll believe and move.

The Lord looked at him in amazement. Why, he says, Philip, have I, have I, oh, I was asking about the father. Well, he can't answer the father without I. How many of you know he can? How many of you saw the I of Jesus is involved, and he can't say that the father is this? Show us the father.

Well, have I, well, Philip wants to say, no, I'm not talking about you. I want the father. Well, now, Philip, wait till I get finished.

Have I been so long time with you, and you have not yet known me, Philip? For, for, for, for, whoever has seen me, not this body, but has seen a manifestation of God and light through me, you've seen the father. For after all, we are one, and what has been manifested through me, that's the father. Now, don't look at my body.

This is the body that this Jesus Christ is wearing. But you want the father. He is spirit.

But he is all of this, too. And you've seen this moving and radiating through me, vibrating through me, in health, in direction, in wisdom, in word, in counsel, in judgment, and you've seen all of that going through me. Whoever has seen that, they've seen the father.

Then he turns to him and he says, Well, if you can't believe me for my word, which is first for us as believers, then believe me for my work's sake. But I prefer that you would believe me for the pure faith in the word, rather than a work that has to be, grow a leg on Susie, and then I'll believe, see. And so he rebukes him for it.

He says, Believe me for my word's sake. Let's not go back to miracles and signs and wonders for unbelievers and all that. Come on with me.

That you would dare to believe my word when you don't see a blessed thing. Not a thing. But you believe my word.

Why? Because I'm bringing you on to a level where I'm not going to cater to that. Children will do that. Children will play there.

And children always stay there. There's no maturity. They still feel that the only way to grow is to intensify that thing.

To intensify that thing doesn't make you grow. It makes it all the more horrible. Because you now have that phase multiplied by multiplication, and you haven't gotten out of a chair.

I've known assemblies where they say, Well, we want to come on into God. Come on into God. Well, how? Well, let's have more of this.

How many of you see that never matures the body? It doesn't. It never matures it. Those are signs and evidences which accompany it.

But the body has to go through something more than a visitation of something which moves in our emotional life and we are refreshed and blessed by it. The body now has to go through its intensive course of discipline and growth. And the growth will not come from that source.

Your growth comes from the intense discipline to which God subjects you. Yes? I have a question. Yes? This matter of leaving the Word.

Yes. I mean, of any of the promises of the Word of God. Oh, exactly.

And applies to a specific case. Absolutely. All the promises in the Word of God are true.

The question isn't the authority of the Word, authenticity of the Word. That is not the question. The question is, does the promise which I have now selected that I think from my side of interpretation, is that the Word that God wants? I can see that it seems to apply to this.

It may not. The Word that God gives always has to relate to the situation as he sees it from his side, not from my side. It's a good one.

I mean, lots of times you can't get the Word of the Lord. You can in time. Yes, you can.

He doesn't deceive us, and he doesn't tease us. If we're quiet enough and not too prejudiced or too over-anxious, we'll find it. But you see, the tendency, the teaching for these years has been so erroneous.

They are taught to believe the promises of God. That's right, because they're all... But the promise has to pertain to the situation as God sees it from his side. And if we can get the Word of God, the promise, it'll

work.

It has to work. Now, the reason for that is this. If I, in my natural religious interest and desire, open this Word, and I study, and I'm very honest about it, and I seek a promise, which I think would be very fitting, I take it out of the Word, and I start trying to believe it, and I'm quite honest believing it because it's the Word of God, you see, because it's out the Bible, and it's true.

But I don't get anywhere. Now, do you know why? Because you have taken the initiative to take a Word which in itself is dead. The letter of the Word is dead.

When God speaks the Word into the heart, it has two attributes. It has all the authority of heaven because it is God-spoken, and it has a quickening power of faith with it. And those two things always go with it, and you can analyze your life back and back and back and back, and you'll see whenever the Word has been of God, it has been created.

If you dare to take it into your heart, it has been created. And before you know it, there's faith is springing. Faith will spring.

He gives the faith for it. I've proved it. I know thousands of people who have that all the time.

But you see, you have to be taught along that line and not do a dangerous thing which is to take the promise and claim it because it is the Word. Now, that won't get you anywhere. Supposing I have a medicine cabinet up here, and it has all kinds of medicines in it, and they are guaranteed through the drug act in Washington, the authority, that they are genuine, and every bit of that is genuine.

Well, supposing I have a pain, and they say, well, go to the medicine cabinet. Go to the cabinet and get something. Will you? Of course, we think, well, I think it's in my stomach.

It would be something I could take. I could drink something that would go to my stomach and ease it. And so you reach in, and you take a little vial of something that says for pains and all this, and you take it, and you die maybe.

But we won't let him die in this story. Maybe he gets violently ill. So somebody who understands this comes and says, what did you take? Well, I took it out to the medicine case, and that's all guaranteed medicine, brother.

We paid \$5 for that. It's all real medicine. Well, dear, we aren't talking about the reality of this being good medicine.

We're talking about, did you get the right vial with the right medicine that fits your condition? Who diagnosed your case? Well, I did. I know where I've got the pain. Well, all right.

All right. Almost all people know where they have their trouble. Well, shall I tell you what you've been drinking? You've been drinking hair oil.

Well, you know, that seems extreme, but you get the point, don't you? That's exactly what they do. And I said, you're violently ill and all upset. You're trying to make something which is good in itself work where it doesn't belong.

But God has something. There is a medicine in here which when applied properly, correctly, it'll work. Now, that's just like the promises.

They go and get one that they think is good and they work on it and it won't work. I want to ask people, how many times have you done that until you're exhausted claiming the promise? Well, I say after you've done that 2,943 times and got nowhere, don't you think it would be nice to sit down and say, hey, Lord, what's the matter here? I do. I'm very honest with the Lord.

I often talk to him. I say, Lord, what's the matter? You're intelligent. I'm halfway there.

Now, talk to me. But no, you must persist in the old pattern. That's why my grandfather, my talk, all the teachers and all the preachers have always said to get the precious promise and lay hold of the promise.

I don't. I say, get a promise that God... Yes. That's right.

Yeah. I would apply it. That's all right.

It's a general proclamation. It's a general proclamation. It's for us.

That's the technique which we are to use in our healing. But you notice the Lord doesn't always heal everybody. No, he doesn't.

Well, they say he did in the old days. No, he didn't. He didn't heal everybody.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Is it possible? It could be. I wouldn't want to be dogmatic about it, but I suppose it could be if there's a high level of spiritual contact, say, with God and understanding, there would be not only the power of God, but there should be the understanding of God, that we'd know how to intelligently handle it, not just merely a prayer, but be intelligent about the prayer. Billy Graham said that the church got healed of the most terrible disease all the time, in the prayer meeting, without being prayed for.

Absolutely, because the heathen are that way. Well, these weren't heathens, though. These are Christians.

Yes, but I mean, it's an easy thing for the heathen. Now, that's why it's nothing startling when you get these magazines that report of the wonderful healings going on among the heathen. That's a perfectly normal thing.

Why? Because they're simple in their faith and God meets them. He's happy to meet them. They have nothing else but just the simplicity of the child, and God honors their little, simple, childlike faith, hundreds and thousands.

But he won't do that to an old plug that doesn't have faith for something more than that. I have a completely different theory about that. Oh, that's good.

I'll tell you why. And he will meet them. That's good.

That's right. Do you know why? That is the reason. Now, why is it that following the awful war in Europe, why is it that afterward there was a flame of real revival among those peasants and those people? It was because they had gone through disaster and fear enough to rob them of any sense of security or

satisfaction in that, and they threw themselves into God.

And it was very easy to work with them. I worked with the refugees in Germany after the war. And it was wonderful to see the response that they had because they would come and they'd say, we've been through enough suffering that the suffering has driven us to God.

America can't have, they have revivals but not what I call an awakening. America will never have a real spiritual awakening until she has suffered. She has not suffered.

She has too much. She has plenty. She'll have a little spurt of a revival, a thousand saviors, somebody, something like that.

That's not what I mean by revival. That's merely a little refreshing that comes to the churches after they pray hard and God blesses and keep them going. But I mean a real awakening.

It's due to a pressure which brings that about. Those people in Europe, they would come to me, they were refugee people, and they said, we have had so much trouble, so much distress, that all those things to which we felt had any moorings grounded, they've been swept away. God is the only thing left now.

And they would call upon God and God would hear them. And they wanted plain God too. They would come and sit there by the hour and they wanted somebody to explain the things of God and life and truth to them.

They were hungry, hungry, and God honored them and they were blessed. We sent over from America sometimes a little lightweight evangelistic group, you know, kind of lightweight stuff. And the German people, they were in themselves disgusted, but they didn't want to be naughty to us because they felt American people are trying to help us.

One of their leaders came to me personally himself, and he said, Brother Follett, you're American and you're in touch with religious groups and people. He said, I wonder if you would do something. Something is disturbing us as Christian men and leaders over here.

He says, do you have any power in the selecting of the caliber of workers that you send? I said, I'm sorry, no, I said, I'm very independent. I walk and come and go alone. I'm not associated with any special groups at all.

I said, why? Well, he said, we don't want them to send that kind of group because they come over blowing horns and playing things and performing for us. And he says, every one of us as refugees have enough...

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