

# The Life of David Brainerd - Part. 2

by Jonathan Edwards

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*This sermon explores the life and spiritual journey of David Brainerd, emphasizing his struggles, devotion to God, and commitment to evangelism.*

**Duration:** 1:10:23

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:20, Exodus 4:14, Exodus 15:1, Job 14:14, Matthew 6:33, Romans 15:30, 1 Thessalonians 4:8

**Topics:** "Audio Books"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, the preacher reflects on their own feelings of unworthiness and insufficiency. They express a desire for a close and constant devotion to God and a fear of being without Him even for a moment. The preacher also discusses their concern for the state of religion and the false appearance of piety that hinders true spiritual growth. They share their experiences of preaching and feeling inadequate, yet still being assisted by God's presence and spirit. The transcript also includes entries from Brainerd's private diary, where he expresses his struggles with inward trials and doubts about his mission among the heathen. Despite his feelings of vileness, he is grateful for the opportunity to preach and is blessed with God's presence and power in his preaching.

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## Transcript

May 1st. I was enabled to cry to God with fervency for ministerial qualifications, that He would appear for the advancement of His own kingdom, and that He would bring in the heathen. Had much assistance in my studies.

This has been a profitable week to me. I have enjoyed many communications of the Blessed Spirit in my soul. May 3rd.

Had a sense of vile ingratitude. In the morning I withdrew to my usual place of retirement and mourned for my abuse of my dear Lord. Spent the day in fasting and prayer.

God gave me much power of wrestling for His cause and kingdom, and it was a happy day to my soul. God was with me all the day, and I was more above the world than ever in my life. May 13th.

At Wethersfield. Saw so much of the wickedness of my heart that I longed to get away from myself. I never before thought that there was so much spiritual pride in my soul.

I felt almost pressed to death with my own vileness. Oh, what a body of death is there in me! Lord, deliver my soul! I could not find any convenient place for retirement, and was greatly exercised. Rode to Hartford in the afternoon.

Had some refreshment and comfort in religious exercises with Christian friends, but longed for more retirement. Oh, the closest walk with God is the sweetest heaven that can be enjoyed on earth. June 14th.

Felt somewhat of the sweetness of communion with God and the constraining force of His love. How admirably it captivates the soul and makes all the desires and affections center on God. I set apart this day for secret fasting and prayer, to entreat God to direct and bless me with regard to the great work which I have in view of preaching the gospel, and that the Lord would return to me and individually show me the light of His countenance.

Had little life and power before noon. Near the middle of the afternoon, God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for absent friends, but then at night the Lord visited me marvelously in prayer. I think my soul never was in such an agony before.

I felt no restraint, for the treasures of divine grace were open to me. I wrestled for absent friends, for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, and for many that I thought were the children of God in many distant places. I was in such an agony from half an hour before sunset till near dark, that I was all over wet with sweat.

It had seemed to me that I had wasted away the day and had done nothing. Oh, my dear Savior did sweat blood for poor souls. I longed for more compassion toward them.

I felt still in a sweet mindset under a sense of divine love and grace, and went to bed in such a mindset with my heart set on God. June 15th. Had the most ardent longings after God.

At noon, in my secret retirement, I could do nothing but tell my dear Lord in a sweet calm that He knew I desired nothing but Himself, nothing but holiness, that He had given me these desires, and He only could give me the thing I desired. I never seemed to be so unhinged from myself and to be so wholly devoted to God. My heart was swallowed up in God most of the day.

In the evening I had such a view of the soul being filled to contain more holiness that it seemed ready to separate from my body. I then wrestled in an agony for divine blessings, had my heart drawn out in prayer for some Christian friends beyond what I ever had before. I feel differently now from what I ever did under my enjoyments before, more engaged to live to God forever, and less pleased with my own accomplishments.

I'm not satisfied with my duties, nor feel it all more easy after such strugglings than before, for it seems far too little if I could always be so. Oh, how short do I fall of my duty in my sweetest moments. June 18th.

Considering my great unfitness for the work of the ministry, my present deadness, and total inability to do anything for the glory of God, feeling myself very helpless and at a great loss what the Lord would have me do, I set apart this day for prayer to God. Though I spent most of the day in that duty, I nevertheless was amazingly despondent most of the day. Yet I found God graciously near.

Once in particular, while I was pleading for more compassion for immortal souls, my heart seemed to be opened at once, and I was enabled to cry with great ardency for a few minutes. Oh, I was distressed to

think that I should offer such dead, cold services to the living God. My soul seemed to breathe after holiness, a life of constant devotedness to God.

But I am almost lost sometimes in the pursuit of this blessedness, and ready to sink because I continually fall short, and my desire remains unsatisfied. Oh, that the Lord would help me to hold out yet a little while until the happy hour of deliverance comes. June 30 Spent this day alone in the woods, in fasting and prayer.

Underwent the most dreadful conflicts in my soul. I saw myself so vile that I was ready to say, I shall now perish by the hand of Saul. I thought that I had no power to stand for the cause of God, but was almost afraid of the shaking of a leaf.

Spent almost the whole day in prayer, incessantly. I could not bear to think of Christians showing me any respect. I almost despaired of doing any service in the world.

I could not feel any hope or comfort respecting the heathen, which used to afford me some refreshment in the darkest hours of this nature. I spent the day in bitterness of soul. Near night I felt a little better, and afterward enjoyed some sweetness in secret prayer.

July 1 Had some enjoyment in prayer this morning, and far more than usual in secret prayer tonight, and desired nothing so ardently as that God should do with me just as He pleased. July 2 Felt composed in secret prayer in the morning. My desires ascended to God this day, as I was traveling, was comfortable in the evening.

Blessed be God for all my consolations. July 3 My heart seemed again to sink. The disgrace I was laid under at college seemed to damp my spirit since it opens the mouths of opposers.

I had no refuge but in God. Blessed be His name, that I may go to Him at all times and find Him a present help. Lord's Day, July 4 Had considerable assistance.

In the evening I withdrew and enjoyed a happy season in secret prayer. God was pleased to give me the exercise of faith, and thereby brought the invisible and eternal world near to my soul. This eternal world appeared sweetly to me.

I hoped that my weary pilgrimage in the world would be short, and that it would not be long before I should be brought to my heavenly home and Father's house. I was resigned to God's will to wait until His time, to do His work, and to consent to His preference. I felt thankfulness to God for all my recent sourness of soul, for I am persuaded that it has been made a means of making me more humble and much more resigned.

I felt pleased to be little, to be nothing, and to lie in the dust. I enjoyed life and consolation in pleading for the dear children of God and the kingdom of Christ in the world. My soul earnestly breathed after holiness and the enjoyment of God.

O come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! July 29 I was examined by the association which met at Danbury as to my learning, and also my experience in religion, and received a license from them to preach the gospel of Christ. Afterward I felt much devoted to God. I joined in prayer with one of the ministers, my close friend, in a convenient place, and went to bed resolving to live devoted to God all my days.

Chapter 3 From Brainerd's private diary, except for any explanations added by President Jonathan Edwards. July 30 through November 25, 1742. From his licensing to preach till he was commissioned as a missionary.

July 30, 1742. Road from Danbury to Southbury. Preached there from 1 Peter, chapter 4, verse 8. Had much of the comfortable presence of God in the exercise.

I seemed to have power with God in prayer, and power to get a hold of the hearts of the people in preaching. August 12, near Kent. This morning and last night I was exercised with pressing inward trials.

I had no power to pray, but seemed shut out from God. I had in a great measure lost my hopes of God's sending me among the heathen in remote areas, and of seeing them flock to Christ. I saw so much of my vileness that I thought it a miracle that God would let me live, and that people did not stone me.

How remarkable that they would ever bear to hear me preach! It seemed as though I never could preach anymore. Yet about nine or ten o'clock the people came over, and I was forced to preach, and blessed be God! He gave me his presence and spirit in prayer and preaching, so that I was much assisted and spoke with power from Job, chapter 14, verse 14. Some Indians residing here cried out in great distress, and all appeared greatly concerned.

After we had prayed and exhorted them to seek the Lord dutifully, and hired an Englishwoman to keep a kind of school among them, we came away. Lord's Day, August 15. Felt much comfort and devotedness to God this day.

At night it was refreshing to get alone with God and pour out my soul. Oh, who can conceive of the sweetness of communion with the blessed God but those who have experience of it? Glory to God forever that I may taste heaven while on earth. August 17.

I felt exceedingly depressed in spirit. It cuts and wounds my heart to think how much self-exaltation, spiritual pride, and rash emotions I display. In the past I have been altogether too distracted from my endeavors to promote God's work.

Sometimes I long to lie down at the feet of opposers and confess what a poor, imperfect creature I have been, and still am. The Lord forgive me and make me for the future wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. Afterward I enjoyed considerable comfort and delight of soul.

August 19. This day, being about to go for Mr. Bellamy's at Bethlehem, where I had resided some time, I prayed with him and two or three other Christian friends. We gave ourselves to God with all our hearts to be his forever.

He turned and looked very near to me while I was praying. If I never should see these Christians again in this world, it seemed but a few moments before I should meet them in another world. August 23.

Had a sweet season in secret prayer. The Lord drew near to my soul and filled me with peace and divine consolation. Oh, my soul tasted the sweetness of heaven and was drawn out in prayer for the world, that it might come home to Christ.

Had much comfort in the thoughts and hopes of the ingathering of the heathen. Was greatly assisted in intercession for Christian friends. September 1. Went to Judea to the ordination of Mr. Judd.

Mr. Bellamy preached from Matthew, chapter 24, verse 46. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. I felt very solemn.

Had my thoughts much on that time when our Lord will come, which refreshed my soul much. Only I was afraid I should not be found faithful, because I have so vile a heart. My thoughts were much in eternity, where I loved to dwell.

Blessed be God for this solemn season. Rode home tonight with Mr. Bellamy, conversed with some friends until it was very late, and then retired to rest in a happy mindset. September 4. I feel very ill, exceedingly depressed in my soul and at awful distance from God.

Toward night I spent some time in profitable thoughts on Romans, chapter 8, verse 2. Then I had a very sweet season in prayer. God enabled me to ardently for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. I pleaded earnestly for my own dear brother John, who much later became his successor as a missionary to the Indians.

That God would make him more of a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, and fit him for special service in the world. My heart sweetly leapt for joy in the Lord, in the thoughts of any distresses that might come upon him or on me in the advancement of Christ's kingdom. It was a sweet and comfortable hour unto my soul, when I was indulged with freedom to plead, not only for myself, but also for many other souls.

September 16. At night enjoyed much of God in secret prayer, felt an uncommon resignation to be and do what God pleased. Some days past, I felt great perplexity on account of my past conduct.

My bitterness and want of Christian kindness and love has been very distressing to my soul. May the Lord forgive me of my unchristian warmth and want of a spirit of meekness. October 21.

Had a very deep sense of the vanity of the world most of the day. I had little more regard for it than if I would forever pass into eternity the next hour. Through divine goodness, I felt very serious and solemn.

Oh, I love to live on the brink of eternity in my views and meditations. This gives me a sweet, awful, and reverential sense and apprehension of God and divine things when I picture myself standing before the judgment seat of Christ. October 22.

Uncommonly weaned from the world today, my soul delighted to be a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. I felt a disposition in never to have anything to do with this world. The character given of some of the ancient people of God in Hebrews 11, verse 13, was very pleasing to me.

The verse reads, They confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, by their daily practice, and oh, that I could always do so. Spent some time in a pleasant grove in prayer and meditation. Oh, it is sweet to be thus weaned from friends and from myself and dead to the present world, that so I may live wholly to and upon the blessed God.

Saw myself little, low, and vile as I am in myself. In the afternoon preached at Bethlehem from Deuteronomy, chapter 8, verse 2. God helped me to speak to the hearts of dear Christians. Blessed be the Lord for this happy season.

I trust they and I shall rejoice because of the Lord's work through me to all eternity. Dear Mr. Bellamy came in while I was making the first prayer, having returned home from a journey. And after meeting, we

walked away together and spent the evening in, sweetly conversing on divine things and praying together, with tender love to each other, and retired to rest with our hearts in a serious spiritual posture.

October 26, at West Suffield. Was in great distress under a sense of my own unworthiness. It seemed to me that I deserved rather to be driven out of the place than to have anybody treat me with kindness or come to hear me preach, and my spirits were really so depressed at this time, as at many others, that it was impossible I should treat immortal souls with faithfulness.

I could not deal closely and faithfully with them. I felt so infinitely vile in myself. Oh, what dust and ashes I am! To think of preaching the gospel to others! Indeed, I never can be faithful for one moment, but shall certainly build a house with crumbling bricks if God does not grant me special help.

In the evening I went to the meeting house, and it looked to me almost as easy for one to rise out of the grave and preach as for me. However, God afforded me some life and power, both in prayer and sermon, and He was pleased to lift me up and show me that He could enable me to preach. Oh, the wonderful goodness of God to so vile a sinner! Later I returned to my lodgings and enjoyed some sweetness in prayer alone.

I mourned that I could not live more to God. November 4th, at Lebanon. Saw much of my nothingness most of this day, but felt concerned that I had not more sense of my insufficiency and unworthiness.

Oh, it is sweet lying in the dust, but it is distressing to feel in my soul that hell of corruption which still remains in me. In the afternoon had a sense of the sweetness of a strict, close and constant devotion to God, and my soul was comforted with His consolations. My soul felt a pleasing yet painful concern, lest I should spend some moments without God.

Oh, may I always live to God! In the evening I was visited by some friends, and spent the time in prayer and such conversation as tended to our edification. It was a comfortable season to my soul. I felt an intense desire to spend every moment for God.

God is unspeakably gracious to me continually. In times past He has given me inexpressible sweetness in the performance of duty. Frequently my soul has enjoyed much of God, but at the same time my soul has been ready to say, Lord, it is good to be here, and so to indulge sloth while I have lived on my enjoyments.

But of late God has been pleased to keep my soul hungry, almost continually, so that I have been filled with a kind of pleasing pain. When I really enjoy God, I feel my desires for Him are more insatiable, and my thirstings after holiness are more unquenchable, and the Lord will not allow me to feel as though I were fully supplied and satisfied, but keeps me still reaching forward. I feel barren and empty, as though I could not live without more of God.

I feel ashamed and guilty before Him. I see that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal. I do not, I cannot live to God.

I truly feel that then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in God's likeness, but never, never before. Consequently I am engaged to press toward the mark, day by day. Oh, that I may feel this continual hunger, and not be retarded, but rather animated by every cluster from Canaan, to reach forward in the narrow way for the full enjoyment and possession of the heavenly inheritance.

Oh, that I may never loiter in my heavenly journey. Lord's Day, November 7th, at Millington. It seemed as if such an unholy wretch as I never could arrive at that blessedness, to be holy as God is holy.

At noon I longed for sanctification and conformity to God. Oh, that is the all, the all. The Lord helped me to press after God forever.

November 8th. Toward night enjoyed much sweetness in secret prayer, so that my soul longed for an arrival in the heavenly country, the blessed paradise of God. Through divine goodness I have scarce seen the day for two months.

Death has never looked so pleasant to me, so much that I would rejoice if I were to die this moment, notwithstanding my present inward trials and conflicts. I trust the Lord will finally make me a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, and that I shall be able to use that triumphant language. Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory? November 19th, at New Haven.

Received a letter from the Rev. Mr. Pemberton of New York, desiring me speedily to go down thither and consult in reference to the evangelizing of the Indians in those parts. He wants me to meet certain gentlemen there who were entrusted with those affairs. My mind was instantly seized with concern, so I retired with two or three Christian friends and prayed, and indeed it was a sweet time with me.

I was enabled to leave myself and all my concerns with God, and taking leave of friends, I rode to Ripton and was comforted in an opportunity to see and converse with dear Mr. Mills. November 24th. I came to New York and felt still much concerned about the importance of my business, made many earnest requests to God for His help and direction.

I was confused with the noise and tumult of the city, and enjoyed but little time alone with God, though my soul longed after Him. November 25th. Spent much time in prayer and supplication.

I was examined in reference to my Christian experience, my acquaintance with divinity, and some other studies and my qualifications for the important work of evangelizing the lost. At this time I was made sensible of my great ignorance and unfitness for public service. I had the most abasing thoughts of myself.

I felt that I was the worst wretch that ever lived. It pained my very heart that anybody should show me any respect. How terrible! I thought how dreadfully they must be deceived in their thoughts of me.

How miserably would they be disappointed if they knew my inside! Oh, my heart! And in this depressed condition I was forced to go and preach to a considerable assembly before some grave and learned ministers. But I felt such a pressure from a sense of vileness, ignorance and unfitness to appear in public that I was almost overcome with it. My soul was grieved for the congregation that they should sit there to hear such a dead dog as I preach.

I thought myself infinitely indebted to the people and longed that God would reward them with some treasure of His grace. I spent much of the evening alone. Chapter 4 From Brainard's Private Diary, except for any explanations added by President Jonathan Edwards.

November 26, 1742 through March 31, 1743. From his appointment as a missionary to his commencing his mission among the Indians at Kaunaumik in New York. November 26, 1742.

I had a sense of my great vileness and endeavored as much as I could to keep alone. Oh, what a nothing! What dust and ashes am I! Enjoyed some peace and comfort in spreading my complaints before the God of all grace. November 27.

Committed my soul to God with some degree of comfort. Left New York about nine in the morning. Came away with a distressing sense still of my unspeakable unworthiness.

Surely it is easy to love all my brethren, for none of them all is so vile as I. Whatever they do outwardly, it still seems to me none is conscious of so much guilt before God. Oh, my leanness, my barrenness, my carnality and past bitterness and want of a Christian attitude, these things oppress my soul. Rode from New York thirty miles to White Plains, and most of the way continued lifting up my heart to God for mercy and purifying grace, and spent the evening much dejected in spirit.

December 1. My soul breathed after God in sweet spiritual and longing desires of conformity to Him, and was brought to rest itself on His rich grace, and felt strength and encouragement to do or suffer anything that divine providence should allot me. Rode about twenty miles from Stratfield to Newtown. Within the space of the next nine days, he went a journey from Newtown to Haddam, his native town, and after staying there some days, returned again to the western part of Connecticut, and came to Southbury.

December 11. Conversed with a dear friend to whom I had thought of giving a liberal education, that he might be fitted for the gospel ministry. I acquainted him with my thoughts on the subject, and so left him to consider of it, till I should see him again.

Then I rode to Bethlehem, came to Mr. Bellamy's lodgings, and spent the evening with him in sweet conversation and prayer. We left the concern of sending my friend to college to the God of all grace. Blessed be the Lord for this evening's opportunity together.

Lord's Day, December 12. I felt in the morning as if I had little or no power either to pray or preach, and felt a distressing need of divine help. I went to meeting trembling, but it pleased God to assist me in prayer and sermon.

I think my soul scarce ever penetrated so far into the immaterial world in any one prayer that I ever made, nor were my devotions ever so free from gross conceptions and imaginations. I preached with some satisfaction from Matthew 6.33, but seek ye first the kingdom of God. In the afternoon I preached from Romans 15.30, which I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

There was much religious fervency in the assembly. This has been a sweet Sabbath to me, and blessed be God, I have reason to think that my religion has become more spiritual by means of my late inward conflicts. Amen.

May I always be willing that God should use His own methods with me. December 14. Some perplexity hung on my mind.

I was distressed last night and this morning for the interests of Zion, especially on account of the false appearance of religion that do but rather breed confusion in some regions. I cried to God for help, to enable me to bear testimony against those things which, instead of promoting, actually hinder the progress of vital piety. In the afternoon I rode down to Southbury and conversed again with my friend on the important subject of his pursuing the work of the ministry.

He appeared much inclined to devote himself to the ministry, if God should grant success to his attempts to qualify himself for so great a work. In the evening I preached from 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 8, and endeavored, though with gentleness, to undermine false religion. The Lord gave me some assistance.

January 14, 1743. My spiritual conflicts today were unspeakably dreadful. Heavier than the mountains and overflowing floods, I was deprived of any sense of God, even in the being of a God, and that was my misery.

The torments of the damned, I am sure, will consist much in a privation of God, and consequently of all good. This taught me the absolute dependence of a creature upon God the Creator, for every crumb of happiness it enjoys. Oh, I feel that, if there is no God, though I might live forever here and enjoy not only this but all other worlds, I should be ten thousand times more miserable than a reptile.

Lord's Day, January 23. I scarce ever felt myself so unfit to exist as now. Saw I was not worthy of a place among the Indians where I am going, if God permit.

I thought I should be ashamed to look them in the face, and much more to have any respect shown me there. Indeed, I felt myself banished from the earth, as if all places were too good for such a wretch. I thought I should be ashamed to go among the very savages of Africa.

I appeared to myself a creature fit for nothing, neither heaven nor earth. None know but those who feel it what the soul endures that is sensibly shut out from the presence of God. Miserable me! It is more bitter than death.

February 2. Preached my farewell sermon last night at the house of an aged man who had been unable to attend on public worship for some time. This morning spent the time in prayer almost wherever I went, and having taken leave of friends, I set out on my journey toward the Indians, though I was first to spend some weeks at Easthampton on Long Island, by permission of the commissioners. They judged the winter season unfavorable for the commencement of the mission.

February 17. Preached this day at a little village in Easthampton, and God was pleased to give me His gracious presence and assistance, so that I spoke with freedom, boldness, and some power. In the evening spent some time with a dear Christian friend, and felt serious, as on the brink of eternity.

Our conversation was truly a little emblem of heaven itself. I find my soul is more refined and weaned from a dependence on my mood and spiritual feelings. February 18.

Had some enjoyment most of the day, and found access to the Throne of Grace. Blessed be the Lord for any intervals of heavenly delight and composure while I am engaged in the field of battle. Oh, that I might be serious, solemn, and always vigilant while in an evil world.

Had some opportunity alone today, and found some freedom in study. Oh, I long to live to God. During the next two weeks, it appears that for the most part he enjoyed much spiritual peace and comfort.

In his diary for this space of time are expressed such things as these--mourning over indwelling sin, unprofitableness, deadness to the world, longing after God, and a longing to live to His glory. He also experienced heart-melting desires after his eternal home, fixed reliance on God for His help, much divine assistance, both in the private and public exercises of religion, inward strength and courage in the service of God, very frequent refreshment, consolation and divine sweetness in meditation, prayer, preaching, and

Christian conversation. And it appears by his account that this space of time was filled up with great diligence and earnestness in serving God, in study, prayer, meditation, preaching, and privately instructing and counseling.

March 7. This morning when I awoke, I found in my heart to go forth after God in longing desires of conformity to Him, and in secret prayer found myself sweetly quickened and drawn out in praises to God for all He had done to and for me, and for all my inward trials and distress of late. My heart ascribed glory, glory, glory to the blessed God, and my heart bid welcome to all inward distress again, if God saw fit to teach me through it. Time appeared but an inch long, an eternity at hand, and I thought I could with patience and cheerfulness bear anything for the cause of God, for I saw that a moment would bring me to a world of peace and blessedness.

My soul, by the strength of the Lord, rose far above this lower world, and all its vain amusements and frightful disappointments. March 14. In the morning was very busy in preparation for my journey, and was almost continually engaged in ejaculatory prayer.

About ten, took leave of the dear people of East Hampton. My heart grieved and mourned, and rejoiced at the same time. Rode near fifty miles to a part of Brookhaven, and lodged there, and had refreshing conversation with a Christian friend.

In two days more he reached New York, but complaints persisted of despondency and deadness on the road. He stayed one day in New York, and on Friday went to Mr. Dickinson's at Elizabeth Town. Lord's Day, March 20.

Preached in the forenoon. God gave me some assistance and enabled me to speak with real tenderness, love, and impartiality. In the evening preached again, and of a truth, God was pleased to assist a poor worm.

Blessed be God, I was enabled to speak with life, power, and desire of the edification of God's people, and with some power to sinners. In the evening I was watchful, lest my heart should by any means be drawn away from God. Oh, when shall I come to that blessed world where every power of my soul will be incessantly and eternally wound up in heavenly employments and enjoyments to the highest degree? On Monday he went to Woodbridge, New Jersey, where he met the correspondents who, instead of sending him to the Indians at the Forks of Delaware, as before intended, directed him to go to a number of Indians at Kownaumik.

This was a region in New York, in the woods between Stockbridge and Albany. The alteration was occasioned by two things. One, information which the correspondents had received of some contention between the white people and the Indians on the Delaware concerning their lands, which they supposed would be a hindrance to the success of a missionary among them at that time.

Two, some hints which they had received from Mr. Sargent, missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge concerning the Indians at Kownaumik, and the hopeful prospect of success which a missionary might have among them. On the day following, he set out on his journey for Kownaumik and arrived at Mr. Sargent's house in Stockbridge, March 31. Chapter Five From Brainerd's private diary, except for any explanations added by President Jonathan Edwards April 1, 1743 through June 12, 1744 This chapter details his labors for nearly a year at Kownaumik, temporal deprivations and sufferings, the establishment of a school, a confession offered to the faculty of Yale College, days of fasting, methods of instructing the

Indians, visits to New Jersey and Connecticut, commencement of labor among the Indians at the Forks of Delaware, and finally his ordination.

April 1, 1743 I rode to Kownaumik in the wilderness near twenty miles from Stockbridge, and about an equal distance from Albany, where the Indians live, with whom I am concerned. I lodged with a poor Scotchman about a mile and a half distant from the Indians, on a little heap of straw in a log room without any floor. I was greatly exercised with inward trials, and seemed to have no God to go to.

Oh, that God would help me! April 7 Appeared to myself exceedingly ignorant, weak, helpless, unworthy, and altogether unequal to my work. It seemed to me that I should never do any service or have any success among the Indians. My soul was weary of my life.

I longed for death beyond measure. When I thought of any godly soul departed, my soul was ready to envy that privilege. I thought, oh, when will my turn come? Must it be years first? But I know these ardent desires at this and other times rose partly from the lack of submission to God under all miseries.

Thus these thoughts were but impatience. Toward night I had the exercise of faith in prayer, and some assistance in writing. Oh, that God would keep me near Him! Lord's Day, April 10 Rose early in the morning and walked out, and spent a considerable time in the woods, in prayer and meditation.

Preached to the Indians both forenoon and afternoon. They behaved soberly in general. Two or three in particular appeared to be under some religious concern, with whom I discoursed privately.

One told me that her heart had cried ever since she first heard me preach. April 16 In the afternoon preached to my people, but was more discouraged with them than before, feared that nothing would ever be done for them to any beneficial effect. I retired and poured out my soul to God for mercy, but without any sensible relief.

Soon after, two ungodly men came, with a design, as they said, to hear me preach the next day, but none can tell how I felt to hear their profane talk. Oh, I longed that some dear Christian should know my distress. I got into a kind of hovel, and there groaned out my complaint to God, and withal felt more sensible gratitude and thankfulness to God that He had made me to differ from these men, as I knew through grace He had.

Lord's Day, April 17 In the morning was again distressed as soon as I awoke, hearing much talk about the world and the things of it. I perceived that the men were in some measure afraid of me. Then I discoursed about sanctifying the Sabbath, if possible, to cause their minds to become solemn.

But when they were at a little distance, they again talked freely about secular affairs. Oh, I thought what a hell it would be to live with such men to eternity. The Lord gave me some assistance in preaching all day and some resignation, and a small degree of comfort in prayer at night.

April 19 In the morning I enjoyed some sweet repose and rest in God, felt some strength and confidence in Him, and my soul was in some measure refreshed and comforted, spent most of the day in writing, and had some exercise of grace, sensible and comfortable. My soul seemed lifted above the deep waters wherein it has long been almost drowned, felt some spiritual longings and breathings after God, and found myself engaged for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in my own soul. April 20 Set apart this day for fasting and prayer, to bow my soul before God for the bestowment of divine grace, especially that all my spiritual afflictions and inward distress might be sanctified to my soul, and endeavored also to remember

the goodness of God to me in the year past, this day being my birthday.

Having obtained help of God, I have hitherto lived and am now arrived at the age of twenty-five years. My soul was pained to think of my barrenness and deadness, and that I have lived so little to the glory of the Eternal God. I spent the day in the woods alone, and there poured out my complaint to God.

Oh, that God would enable me to live to His glory for the future. May 18 My circumstances are such that I have no comfort of any kind but what I have in God. I live in the most lonesome wilderness, have but one single person to converse with that can speak English.

Most of the talk I hear is either Highland Scotch or Indian. I have no fellow Christian to whom I may unbosom myself, or lay open my spiritual sorrows, with whom I may take sweet counsel in conversation about heavenly things and join in social prayer. I live poorly with regard to the comforts of life.

Most of my diet consists of boiled corn, hasty pudding, and the like. I lodge on a bundle of straw. My labor is hard and extremely difficult, and I have little appearance of success to comfort me.

The Indians have no land to live on but what the Dutch people lay claim to. The Dutch threaten to drive them off and have no regard to the souls of the poor Indians. For what I can learn, the Dutchmen hate me because I come to preach to them.

But that which makes all my difficulties grievous to be born is that God hides his face from me. On Monday, May 30th, he set out on a journey to New Jersey to consult the commissioners and obtain orders from them to set up a school among the Indians at Kaanaumik. He also requested that his interpreter might be appointed the schoolmaster, which was accordingly done.

He proceeded from New Jersey to New Haven, where he arrived on Monday, June 6th. There he attempted a reconciliation with the faculty of Yale College. He spent the rest of this week in visiting his friends in those parts and in his journey homeward till Saturday in a pretty comfortable frame of mind.

On Saturday, in his way from Stockbridge to Kaanaumik, he was lost in the woods and lay all night in the open air. But happily he found his way in the morning and came to his Indians on Lord's Day, June 12th, and had a greater assistance in preaching among them than ever before since his first coming among them. From this time forward, he experienced continued variation in his religious fervency and mood till he got into his own house, a little hut which he made chiefly with his own hands by long and hard labor.

He found that the remoteness of the family with whom he had first lodged debarred him from many favorable opportunities of access to the Indians, especially during mornings and evenings. So after about three months he relocated and lived with the Indians in one of their wigwams. Here he continued for about one month when he completed the small house of which he now speaks.

Although he was much dejected during most of this period, still he had many intermissions of his melancholy and some seasons of comfort, sweet tranquility, and resignation of mind, and frequently special assistance in public services as appears in his diary. The manner of his relief from his sorrow, once in particular, is worthy to be mentioned in his own words. July 25th.

Had little or no resolution for a life of holiness. Was ready almost to renounce my hope of living to God, and oh how dark it looked to think of being unholy forever! This I could not endure. The cry of my soul was Psalm 65-3.

Inequities prevail against me, but I was in some measure relieved by a comfortable meditation on God's eternity. That is, that he never had a beginning. On this basis I was led to admire his greatness and power in such a manner that I stood still and praised the Lord for his own glories and perfections.

Though I was an unholy creature, my soul was comforted to apprehend an eternal, infinite, powerful, holy God. July 30th. At night moved into my own house, and lodged there that night.

Found it much better spending the time alone than in the wigwam where I was before. Lord's Day, July 31st. Felt more comfortable than some days past.

Blessed be the Lord, who has now given me a place of retirement. Oh that I may find God in it, and that he would dwell with me forever. August 1st.

Was still busy in further labors on my house. Felt a little sweetness of religion, and thought that it was worthwhile to follow after God through a thousand snares, deserts, and death itself. Oh that I might always follow after holiness.

That I may be fully conformed to God. Had some degree of sweetness in secret prayer, though I had much sorrow. August 3rd.

Spent most of the day in writing. Enjoyed some sense of religion. Through divine goodness I am now uninterruptedly alone, and find my retirement comfortable.

I have enjoyed more sense of divine things within a few days last past than for some time before. I longed after holiness, humility, and meekness. Oh that God would enable me to pass the time of my sojourning here in his fear, and always live to him.

August 15th. Spent most of the day in labor, to procure something to shelter my horse in the winter. Had not much spiritual enjoyment in the morning.

Was very weak in body through the day, and thought that this frail body would soon drop into the dust, and had some very keen apprehensions of a speedy entrance into another world. In this weak state of body I was not little distressed for want of suitable food. I had no bread, nor could I get any.

I am forced to go or send ten or fifteen miles for all the bread I eat, and sometimes it is moldy and sour before I eat it, if I get any considerable quantity. And then again I have none for some days together, for lack of an opportunity to send for it, and inability to find my horse in the woods to go myself. But through divine goodness I had some Indian meal of which I made cakes and fried them.

Yet I felt contented with my circumstances, and sweetly resigned to God. In prayer I enjoyed great freedom, and blessed God as much for my present circumstances as if I had been a king. I thought that I found a disposition to be contented in any circumstance.

Blessed be God! In his diary for Saturday he says he was somewhat melancholy and sorrowful in mind, and adds, I never feel comfortable when I find my soul going forth after God. If I cannot be holy, I must necessarily be miserable forever. Lord's Day, August 21.

My mind was cleared by the forenoon exercise. My prior thoughts seemed to be all scattered to the ends of the earth. At noon I fell down before the Lord, groaned under my vileness, barrenness, and deadness, and felt as if I was guilty of soul murder in speaking to immortal souls in such a manner as I had then

done.

In the afternoon God was pleased to give me some assistance, and I was enabled to set before my hearers the nature and necessity of true repentance. Afterward had some small degree of thankfulness, was very ill and full of pain in the evening, and my soul mourned that I had spent so much time to so little profit. August 23.

Studied in the forenoon and enjoyed some freedom. In the afternoon labored outside, endeavored to pray, but found not much enjoyment or intenseness of mind. Toward night was very weary and tired of this world of sorrow.

The thoughts of death and immortality appeared very undesirable, and even refreshed my soul. These lines turned in my mind with pleasure. Come, death, shake hands.

I'll kiss thy hands. 'Tis happiness for me to die. What, dost thou think that I will shrink? I'll go to immortality.

August 31. On a journey to New York. Was in a sweet, serious, and, I hope, Christian mindset.

Eternal things engrossed all my thoughts, and I longed to be in the world of spirits. Oh, how happy it is to have all our thoughts swallowed up in that world, to feel oneself a stranger in this world, diligently seeking a road through it, the best, the sure road to the heavenly Jerusalem. He went forward on his journey, and after lodging two or three days in New York, he set out from that city toward New Haven, intending to be there at the commencement for Yale College.

Lord's Day, September 11. At Horseneck. In the afternoon, I preached from Titus, chapter 3, verse 8. I think God never helped me more in painting a picture of true religion than in describing it clearly.

He aided me in tenderly exposing false appearances of religion, wildfire, party zeal, spiritual pride, as well as a confident, dogmatic spirit. And at spring, ignorance of the heart. In the evening, I took great pains in private conversation to suppress some confusions which I perceived were among that people.

September 13. Road to New Haven. Was sometimes dejected, not in the sweetest mindset.

Had some profitable Christian conversation. I find, though my inward trials were great, yet it is better to be alone than encumbered with noise and tumult. A life of solitude gives inward trials greater advantage to settle and penetrate to the very inmost recesses of the soul.

I find it very difficult maintaining any sense of divine things while traveling from place to place. One is diverted with new objects and filled with care and business. A settled, steady business is best adapted to a life of strict religion.

September 14. This day, I ought to have taken my degree from Yale College, but God sees fit to deny me it. I was greatly afraid of being overwhelmed with perplexity and confusion when I should see my classmates take their degrees.

Yet, at the very time, God enabled me with calmness and resignation to say, The will of the Lord be done. Indeed, through divine goodness, I have scarcely felt my mind so calm, sedate and comfortable for some time. I have long feared this season and expected my humility, meekness, patience and resignation would be much tried.

Nevertheless, I have found much more pleasure and divine comfort than I expected. Felt spiritually serious, tender and affectionate in private prayer with a dear Christian friend today. September 15.

Had some satisfaction in hearing the minister's discourse. It is always a comfort to me to hear religious and spiritual conversation. Oh, that ministers and people were more spiritual and devoted to God.

Toward night, with the advice of Christian friends, I offered the following reflections in writing to the rector and trustees of the college, which are for substance the same that I had freely offered to the rector before and entreated him to accept. What I offered is as follows. Admitting I have said before several persons concerning Mr. Whittlesey, one of the tutors of Yale College, that I did not believe he had any more grace than the chair I then leaned upon, I humbly confess that herein I have sinned against God and acted contrary to the rules of his word and have injured Mr. Whittlesey.

I had no right to deal so lightly with his character and not just reason to say what I did concerning him. My fault herein was the more aggravated in that I said this concerning one who was so much my superior and one whom I was obliged to treat with special respect and honor by reason of the relation I stood to him in the college. Such a manner of behavior, I confess, did not become a Christian and did not savor of that humble respect which I ought to have expressed towards Mr. Whittlesey.

I have long since been convinced of the falseness of those apprehensions by which I then justified such a statement. I have often reflected on this act with grief, I hope, on account of the sin of it. Now I am willing to lie low and be abased before God and man for it.

I humbly ask the forgiveness of the governors of the college and of the whole society, but of Mr. Whittlesey in particular. And since I have been accused by one person of saying concerning the Reverend Rector of Yale College that I wondered he did not expect to drop down dead for fining the scholars that followed Mr. Tennant to Milford, I seriously profess that I do not remember my saying anything to this purpose. But if I did, which I am not certain I did not, I utterly condemn it and detest all such kind of behavior, and especially in an undergraduate toward the Rector.

And I now appear to judge and condemn myself for going once to a separate meeting in New Haven, a little before I was expelled, though the Rector had refused to give me leave. For this I humbly ask the Rector's forgiveness. And while the governors of the college shall ever seek cause to remove the academic censure I lie under or not, or to admit me to the privileges I desire, yet I am willing to appear, if they think fit, openly to own and to humble myself for those things I have herein confessed.

God has made me willing to do anything that I can do consistently with truth for the sake of peace, and that I might not be a stumbling block to others. For this reason I can cheerfully forego and give up what I verily believe, after the most mature and impartial search is my right, in some instances. God has given me the disposition that, if a man has done me a hundred injuries, and I, though ever so much provoked by it, have done him only one, I feel disposed and heartily willing, humbly, to confess my fault to him, and on my knees to ask forgiveness of him.

I would do this even though at the same time he should justify himself in all the injuries he has done me, and should only make use of my humble confessions to blacken my character the more, and represent me as the only person guilty. Actually, what I said concerning Mr. Whittlesey was only spoken in private, to a friend or two, and being partly overheard was related to the rector, and by him extorted from my friends. Yet, seeing it was divulged and made public, I am willing to confess my fault therein publicly.

But I trust God will plead my cause. I was witness to the very Christian spirit which Brainerd showed at that time, being then at New Haven, and one whom he thought fit to consult on that occasion. This was my first opportunity for a personal acquaintance with him.

There truly appeared in him a great degree of calmness and humility, without the least appearance of vengeful intentions for any ill treatment which he supposed he had suffered. Nor was there the least resistance to abasing himself before them who, as he thought, had wronged him. What he did was without any objection or appearance of reluctance, even in private to his friends, to whom he freely opened himself.

Earnest application was made on his behalf to the authority of the College that he might have his degree then given him, and particularly by the Reverend Mr. Burr of Newark, one of the correspondents of the Society in Scotland. David Brainerd had been sent from New Jersey to New Haven by the rest of the commissioners to obtain his degree. Many arguments were used, but without success.

Indeed, the governors of the College were so far satisfied with the reflections which Brainerd had made on himself that they appeared willing to admit him again into College, but not to give him his degree till he should have remained there at least twelve months. This offer, however, was contrary to what the correspondents to whom he was now engaged had declared to be on their mind. He desired his degree, as he thought it would tend to his being more extensively useful.

But still, when he was denied it, he manifested no disappointment or resentment. September 20th, at Bethlehem. I had thoughts of going forward on my journey to my Indians.

But toward night I was taken with a hard pain in my teeth and shivering cold. I could not possibly recover a comfortable degree of warmth the whole night following. I continued very full of pain all night, and in the morning had a very hard fever, and pains almost over my whole body.

I had a sense of the divine goodness in appointing this to be the place of my sickness among my friends, who were very kind to me. I should probably have perished if I had first got home to my own house in the wilderness, where I have none to converse with but the poor, rude, ignorant Indians. Here, I saw, was mercy in the midst of affliction.

I continued thus, mostly confined to my bed, till Friday night, very full of pain most of the time, but, through divine goodness not afraid of death. Then I saw the extreme folly of those who put off their turning to God till a sick bed. Surely this is not a time proper to prepare for eternity.

On Friday evening my pains went off somewhat suddenly. I was exceedingly weak and almost fainted, but was very comfortable the night following. I thought we were to prize the continuation of life only on this account, that we may show forth God's goodness and works of grace.

October 4. This day I rode home to my own house and people. The poor Indians appeared very glad to see me return, found my house and all things in safety. I presently fell on my knees and blessed God for my safe return.

I have taken many considerable journeys since this time last year, and yet God has never suffered one of my bones to be broken or any distressing calamity to befall me, except the illness I had in my last journey. I have often been exposed to cold and hunger in the wilderness, where the comforts of life were not to be had, have frequently been lost in the woods, and sometimes obliged to ride much of the night. Once I even

lay out in the woods all night.

Yet, blessed be God, He has preserved me. November 3. Spent this day in secret fasting and prayer from morning till night. Early in the morning I had some small degree of assistance in prayer.

Afterward read the story of Elijah, the prophet. First Kings, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth chapters, and also Second Kings, second and fourth chapters. My soul was much moved, observing the faith, zeal, and power of that holy man, how he wrestled with God in prayer, and so much more.

My soul then cried with Elisha, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Oh, I longed for more faith. My soul breathed after God and pleaded with Him that a double portion of that spirit which was given to Elijah might rest on me. It was divinely refreshing and strengthening to my soul that I saw God to be the same that He was in the days of Elijah.

I was enabled to wrestle with God by prayer in a more affectionate, fervent, humble, intense, and importunate manner than I have for many months past. Nothing seemed too hard for God to perform, nothing too great for me to hope for from Him. I had for many months entirely lost all hope of being made instrumental of doing any special service for God in the world.

It has appeared entirely impossible that one so vile should be thus employed for God, but at this time God was pleased to revive this hope. Afterward, I read from the third chapter of Exodus to the twentieth and saw more of the glory and majesty of God discovered in those chapters than ever I had seen before. Frequently, in the meantime, falling on my knees and crying to God for the faith of Moses and for a manifestation of the divine glory.

Especially the third, fourth, and part of the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters were unspeakably sweet to my soul. My soul blessed God that He had shown Himself so graciously to His servants of old. The fifteenth chapter seemed to be the very language which my soul uttered to God in the season of my first spiritual comfort, when I had just got through the Red Sea by a way I had no expectation of.

Oh, how my soul then rejoiced in God! And now those things came fresh and lively to my mind. Now my soul blessed God afresh that He had opened that unthought-of way to deliver me from the fear of the Egyptians, when I almost despaired of life. Afterward, I read the story of Abraham's pilgrimage in the land of Canaan.

My soul was melted in observing his faith, how he leaned on God, how he communed with God, and what a stranger he was here in the world. After that, I read the story of Joseph's sufferings and God's goodness to him. I blessed God for these examples of faith and patience.

My soul was ardent in prayer, was enabled to wrestle ardently for myself, for Christian friends, and for the Church of God. My soul felt more desire to see the power of God in the conversion of souls than it has for a long season. Blessed be God for this season of fasting and prayer.

May His goodness always abide with me and draw my soul to Him. November 10th. Spent this day in fasting and prayer alone, and the morning was very dull and lifeless, melancholy and discouraged.

But after some time, while reading 2 Kings 19, my soul was moved and affected, especially reading verse 14 and onward. I saw there was no other way for the afflicted children of God to take but to go to God with all their sorrows. Hezekiah, in his great distress, went and spread his complaint before the Lord.

I was then enabled to see the mighty power, and to cry to Him affectionately and ardently for His power and grace to be exercised toward me. Afterward, I read the story of David's trials, and observed the course he took under them, how he strengthened his hands in God, whereby my soul was carried out after God, enabled to cry to Him and rely upon Him, and felt strong in the Lord. Was afterward refreshed, observing the blessed disposition that was wrought in David by his trials.

All bitterness and desire for revenge seemed wholly taken away, so that he mourned for the death of his enemies. I was enabled to bless God that He had given me something of His divine temper, that my soul freely forgives and heartily loves my enemies. November 29th.

Began to study the Indian tongue with Mr. Sergeant at Stockbridge. I was perplexed for want of more retirement. I love to live alone in my little cottage, where I can spend much time in prayer and other duties.

Lord's Day, January 1st, 1744. In the morning had some small degree of assistance in prayer. Saw myself so vile and unworthy that I could not look my people in the face when I came to preach.

Oh, my meanness, folly, ignorance, and inward pollution. In the evening had a little assistance in prayer, so that the duty was delightful rather than burdensome. Reflected on the goodness of God to me in the past year.

Of a truth God has been kind and gracious to me, though He has caused me to pass through many sorrows. He has provided for me bountifully, so that I have been enabled in about fifteen months past to bestow to charitable uses about one hundred pounds New England money, so far as I remember. Blessed be the Lord who has so far used me as His steward to distribute a portion of His goods.

May I always remember that all I have comes from God. Blessed be the Lord that He has carried me through all the toils, fatigues, and hardships of the year past, as well as the spiritual sorrows and conflicts that have attended it. Oh, that I could begin this year with God, and spend the whole of it to His glory, either in life or death.

January 3rd. Was employed much of the day in writing, and spent some time in other necessary employment. But my time passes away so swiftly that I am astonished when I reflect on it, and see how little I do.

My state of solitude does not make the hours hang heavy upon my hands. Oh, what reason of thankfulness have I on account of this retirement? I find that I do not--and it seems I cannot--lead a Christian life when I am abroad, and cannot spend time in devotion, Christian conversation, and serious meditation as I should do. Those weeks that I am obliged now to be from home in order to learn the Indian tongue are mostly spent in perplexity and barrenness, without much sweet relish of divine things, and I feel myself a stranger at the throne of grace for want of more frequent and continued retirement.

When I return home and give myself to meditation, prayer, and fasting, a new scene opens to my mind, and my soul longs for mortification, self-denial, humility, and divorcement from all things of the world. This evening my heart was somewhat warm and fervent in prayer and meditation, so that I was loathed to indulge sleep. Continued in those duties till about midnight.

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